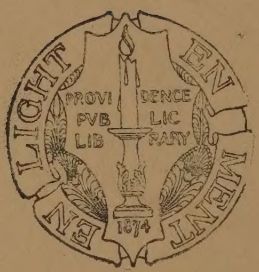
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THE CHRONICLER OF EUROPEAN CHIVALRY

THE CHRONICLER OF EUROPEAN CHIVALRY

Printed in Great Britain
by Herbert Reiach, Ltd.,
43 Belvedere Road, S.E.1

THE CHRONICLER OF EUROPEAN CHIVALRY

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Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge

Author of "Chaucer and his England," etc.

1930

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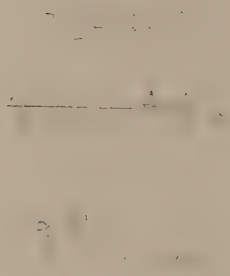

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THE EDITOR DESIRES TO EXPRESS his thanks to the Director of the British Museum and the Keeper of the Department of Illuminated Manuscripts who have kindly allowed the miniatures in Harley 4379 and 4380 to be reproduced here.

INTRODUCTION

I

The ordinary man will take his History, in common with much else, largely on trust : and this for two reasons. He must begin to learn it long before he is equipped to question it ; and, thereafter, he may quite possibly remember or forget it without ever discovering the inclination, or the need, to examine the evidence for what was never allowed to seem in doubt. For, History is the memory of mankind, and the desire to be remembered has more in common with an ambition to be believed, than with a devotion to accuracy. After all, men do not remember and record things because they are *true*, but because they are *memorable*.

As a civilisation develops, becomes more elaborate and feels itself to be more secure, its attitude towards the past develops with it and undergoes a transformation so radical as to seem completely revolutionary. In times of great hazard, the vital necessity is to recall to those generations in whose keeping the future lies, what stature their ancestors were of, and what manner of blood is in their own veins. The historic past is the weight behind the cutting edge of the present. In periods of greater security, however, there flourish the scientific historians, whose concern it is to establish the truth, however fatal to the heroic figures of the past, however uninspiring to their descendants.

Froissart, himself, stands at a point of history which might well have seemed a prelude to disaster. Medieval Christendom had always existed under a menace. The wave of Islam had already engulfed the Holy Places, and was, in the end, to break over the Capital of the East and spend itself at the very gates of Vienna. Nor was it finally turned back from Spain into Africa, until the Middle Ages were at an end. More than that, in Froissart's own lifetime, the Black Death had devastated the world, and Feudal institutions were cracking under the resulting strain. Peasants were in revolt and were crushed back into serfdom. Whole country-sides were laid waste in the wars, cities were sacked and their inhabitants given to the sword. The Western Church was rent in twain : there was a Pope at Avignon and a Pope at Rome, and doctrines held necessary to salvation by them both were beginning to be called in question in England and in Bohemia. He saw mad kings and boy kings on the thrones of England and France, and faction attended, in both countries, by treachery and murder. The Renaissance was on its way.

In such times Froissart set himself to write the Chronicles to the end that no notable exploit of a man's doing should remain unchronicled, if he could hear of it. He writes, it is true, to recommend himself to a patron ; but he writes, also, to ' praise famous men.' This is the heart of the matter. Froissart is concerned with the greatness of men in times of stress, with marvels and

notable happenings, with pageants and with tragedies. Moreover, he is writing of his own times, and of times of which men yet living could recall great deeds in which they bore a part. He was, besides, a poet and a writer of Romance. In all this he stands nearer to Homer in the Mycenaean decadence, to the Jewish historians in the Captivity, to Shakespeare brooding over the heroic past among the Osrics and the Guildensterns, than he does to the detached, enquiring temper of modern historians, many of whom would, doubtless, gladly barter pages of Froissart's narrative for a glimpse of the Manorial Rolls lost in the Peasants' Revolt.

II

Men did not fall asleep, one night, in the Middle Ages, to awaken, the next morning in the Renaissance. Yet, out of the long and obscure agony of transition, there certainly emerges an epoch, very different in temper from that which had gone before. But, while the former term merely seems to indicate a span of time between an earlier and a later Age, the name "Renaissance" clearly claims a special character—an Age in which something has been re-born. It is easy, therefore, to forget that the Middle Ages were, themselves, a Renaissance, and that the thing re-born in them, consciously and with pangs, was Rome. Charlemagne and Otto I, alike, claimed to resuscitate and re-impose the Empire of the West; not to found a new Empire, but to bring to life, verily and indeed, the Empire of the Western Caesars. It is this theory which distinguishes the Middle Ages, theoretical as they were in their whole temper, the theory that the proper mould of Europe, for all time, was the Roman Empire. Dr. Coulton rightly insists that unity and universality were never achieved, that Christendom was rent by wars and schisms: but the special character of the Middle Ages is that this unity was consciously proposed by Popes and Emperors, not as an ideal, but as a goal, and was as consciously resisted and, in the end, defeated.

But it is relevant to notice here, that out of two contacts between Rome and the Teutonic nature was struck, or so it seemed, the spark of Chivalry. A thousand years before Froissart, Britain was drained of legionaries to reinforce Stilicho and to back the Imperial pretensions of Magnus Maximus and the usurper Constantine: and the Saxons came. It is difficult to doubt that, after four hundred years of Roman influence, such remnant as withstood the invader, under that historic figure around whom the romances of King Arthur took their shape, did so, not as Britons deserted by their conquerors, but *more Romano*, as the heirs and representatives of Rome: and, were Excalibur dredged up, we should find it, not the long Medieval sword of legend, but the leaf-shaped sword of Rome. In later ages, Arthur and his knights became the very founts of Chivalry, together with those others, Charlemagne and his Paladins, who fought to re-establish what Arthur, it seemed, had fought in vain to save. It was to these two figures, their splendour enhanced by centuries of legend, that Chivalry, in the later acceptation of the term, returned in conscious imitation.

Now, of Chivalry it may be said, that at the moment of its becoming conscious it tends to become corrupt. There had overtaken it a change such as is exemplified in the characters of the Knight and the Squire, in Chaucer's Prologue to the Canterbury Tales. Of the Knight, he says :—

" he lovede chyvalrie
" Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisye.
" Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
" And therto hadde he riden, no man ferre
" As wel in Christendom as in hethenesse,
" And evere honoured for his worthinesse."

while of the Squire, he says :—

" And he hadde ben somtyme in chivachye,
" In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Picardye,
" And born him well, as of so litel space,
" In hope to stonden in his lady grace."

The beginnings of Chivalry, as a standard of knightly conduct, are in the great Military Orders, such as the Templars, the Knights of S. John, and the Knights of the Teutonic Order. Its impulse was wholly religious. The change comes about when the inspiration is the hope ' to stonden in his lady grace.' Already, in the late Twelfth Century, this tendency is discernible in Provence, where it provoked the condign punishment of the Church, in the ghastly Albigensian Crusade. There is a vivid and, probably, by no means exaggerated picture of what it could become, in Lion Feuchtwanger's brilliant novel, " The Ugly Duchess," which is concerned with Froissart's period : Margaret Maultasch, indeed, was the aunt by marriage of Richard's queen, Anne of Bohemia.

It is impossible, within the compass of this introduction, to give an account of Chivalry as an institution, in its most highly developed form, or of its courts, its ceremonies and its codes. In its decline it was romantic, extravagant and ostentatious, and contained the possibilities of an immense corruption. It replaced the older and severer understanding of the term, the ideal which animated Chaucer's Knight, and it identified itself, consciously, with the legends which surrounded the names of Arthur and Charlemagne.

The transition from the Middle Ages represents, not so much the change from one system to another, as the shifting of an emphasis. The important characteristics of the Middle Ages are not of the same kind as those of the Renaissance. The Middle Ages represent a re-birth of the conception of the Roman mould of Christendom, knit together by a network of Feudal loyalties, where the Roman Empire was very dissimilarly knit by a highly organised and centralised administrative system. In the Renaissance, on the other hand, the fruitful impulse is cultural, rather than political. There coincided with the breakdown of the Medieval political theory and with the establishment of

the despotisms and republics of the Renaissance, a vivid impulse towards a revival of the culture of the classical past, released from the theory which had dominated Christendom for so long. Life in Italy was quickened by the consciousness of inhabiting the very scenes, not only of Classical History, but of Classical Mythology. This return to remote origins is the real parallel of the return of the North, in the age of Chivalry, to its own legendary beginnings. But, while the return to Arthur and Charlemagne was a return to origins Christian and consonant with the immediate past, the return to Classical antiquity was one to origins Pagan and wholly opposed to the whole spirit of the preceding centuries.

In effect, then, the Age of Froissart, the transitional age between the Middle Ages and the full extension to the North of the influence of the Italian Renaissance, presents itself as not truly Medieval at all, but as an Age comparable to the Early Renaissance in Italy, one that was discovering that the actualities had been too intractable to receive the impress of the Medieval political logic, and whose mind was turning back to its romantic origins. It was an Age that was learning to bow to despotism based on the flimsiest of theoretical claims. The facts were too strong for it: it was beginning to dream. It was abandoning the attempt to impose its divine theory upon an unregenerate world. Political theory was becoming a part of culture and the handmaid of despotism. Might was beginning to be right.

III

While Dr. Coulton's study of Froissart and his Times ranges over the whole period of his life, the miniatures which accompany it are taken from a manuscript of the Fifteenth Century, which contains only the Fourth Book of the Chronicles. Of this manuscript a full account will be found in Kervyn de Lettenhove, "Oeuvres de Froissart," Vol. I (1873), pp. 323–325. The reader will find that it covers only the last ten years of the reign of Richard II. The entry of Queen Isabel into Paris was in 1389: the death of Richard II in 1399. In Sir R. Lodge's "Close of the Middle Ages," in addition to an invaluable bibliography of the period, there is a chronological table, by the aid of which the distribution in time of the events depicted can be determined with but little difficulty.

The miniatures themselves stand at the beginning of the several chapters in the manuscript, and necessarily offer no connected story, divorced from their text. Only, towards the end, the tragedy of Richard II dominates the imagination, in a series whose effect is heightened by an occasional interpolation, culminating in the strangely moving scene of his burial—a series which, in its accumulated tragedy, seems almost comparable to those presentations of the Way of the Cross, with which the same miniaturist might, at another time, have occupied himself.

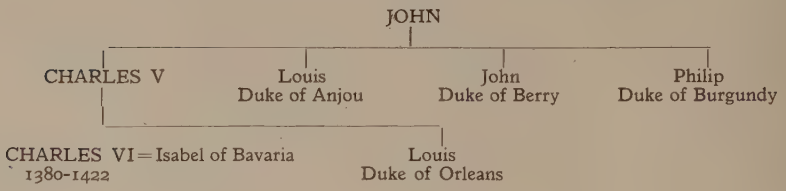
Fascinating as these miniatures are, and vividly as they present to the mind the brilliant and tragic scenes of Froissart's narrative, they must not be taken as evidence for the costumes, armour or architecture of the Fourteenth Century. For the period at which they were painted, they are invaluable. But, in accordance with the customary practice, they are in "modern dress," the dress of the period in which they were made. There is no attempt at antiquarian reconstruction. Fortunately, the cathedrals and the monastic and parish churches of England are still rich in monuments of the Middle Ages, memorial brasses and sculptured effigies, many of which still bear their dates.

Between the death of Richard II and the painting of these miniatures, an immense change took place in the armour of a knight. The effigy of the Black Prince in Canterbury Cathedral exhibits a type of armour which continued, with little variation, from about 1360 until Agincourt. It is not, indeed, the armour of Crecy—which may be seen in the brass of Sir Hugh de Hastyngs, at Elsing in Norfolk—but it is the armour of the whole period of Froissart's Fourth Book. The armour of Richard Beauchamp (p. 133 in this book) is, although it exhibits certain unique features, fairly characteristic of the early second half of the Fifteenth Century. In the miniatures, armour has reached its most ornamental and even extravagant pitch. The acutely pointed sollerets, the enormous condières, the flutings and the laminations, exaggerated, perhaps, by the artist, resemble the fashion of about 1470. As Dr. Coulton rightly points out, there is a similar extravagance of fashion in the costume of ladies and civilians. Architecture, on the other hand, exhibits the square-headed windows, with mullions and transoms, simpler and less magnificent externally than the work of Richard II's reign, as it can be seen, for instance, in Westminster Hall.

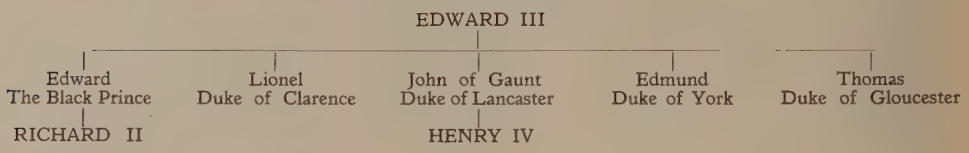
In conclusion, it is interesting to note that the part of the reign of Richard II, depicted in this manuscript, is substantially that chosen by Shakespeare for his play. Shakespeare allows himself certain chronological liberties, as a dramatist may, and even boldly makes Anne of Bohemia "die hereafter." But here are the same follies and calamities, presented so as to invite compassion for a fallen king, if only in virtue of his fall. Richard's own character is full of contradictions, about which it is fascinating, if idle, to speculate. We can hardly discover, in the young king unequal to his fortunes, the boy whose instant genius redeemed the folly of Wat Tyler's murder. Henry I bound himself, in his Coronation Charter, to govern according to the laws of S. Edward. It was this Charter that Stephen Langton made the basis of Magna Carta. Richard, himself, impaled the arms of S. Edward with his own. Did some large intention inform that action? Was it to signify some marriage of a king to the aspirations of a people? Or was it a high and heraldic gesture, and no more? Whatever it was, it was lost in the final ruin. If "men might, and ought, have trusted the King," we shall not know it.

GERALD CROW.

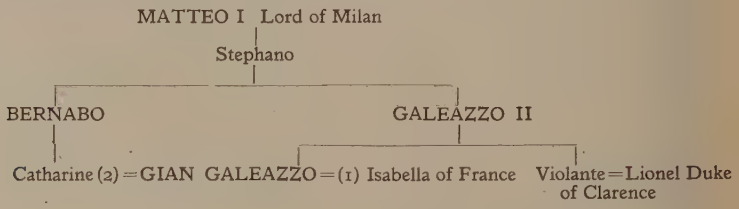
THE HOUSE OF VALOIS IN FRANCE



THE SONS OF EDWARD III



THE HOUSE OF VISCONTI IN MILAN



We have two admirable studies of Froissart, one by Mary Darmesteter, to which every student of the subject must feel himself deeply indebted, in Hachette's series of "Les Grands Ecrivains" (1894), and another reprinted by W. P. Ker from his preface to the *Chronicles* in *Tudor Translations* (*Essays on Medieval Literature*. Macmillan, 1905). Still more valuable is the volume of ample selections from Lord Berners's translation, made by G. C. Macaulay (Macmillan, 1895). Numerous references to the pages of this edition will be found in the footnotes to the present essay.

La requeste contemplation z plaisance de treshaut et noble prince mon treschier seigneur z maistre Guy de chastillon conte de blois seigneur dauesnes de chymay et de beaumont de scomelsone et de la grode. Je ichan frois saur prebstre et chappelain a mon tresdit seigneur desſus nõme et pour le temps de lors tresoutre et chanoine de chymay et de lille en flandres ille ſius de nouuel recueillie et entre de ma fo me pour ouurer et former en la ſaincte et noble maniere de la quelle du temps passe ie me ſuis ensomme. Laquelle tauure et proposse les ſius et aduenues

FROISSART

AND HIS CHRONICLES

1

Sir John Froissart was not a knight but a priest; the Middle Ages dignified both classes by that same title, which survives in Sir Hugh Evans of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. By profession, then, he was a priest, yet scarcely less professionally was he a chronicler of knightly things. He is one of the earliest of the citizen authors in the Middle Ages, a class which appears at the very beginning of the fourteenth century, and naturally becomes more numerous as time goes on. Dante, earliest and greatest of all these citizen authors, was in a certain sense the first man of the Renaissance, for he is the first really learned layman whom we meet in Western Europe; in England, we find no such learned layman until we come to Sir Thomas More. After Dante came Petrarch and Boccaccio, no less enthusiastic than he for that revival of classical studies which was one of the two main factors in the Renaissance. Yet all three, even Dante, lacked that radicalism in thought which constitutes the other, and perhaps the most characteristic, factor of the Renaissance. To Dante, as

to St. Thomas Aquinas, there were certain fundamental premises which no human mind had a right to call in question. This limitation, for limitation it is, however we may choose to interpret it—was quite natural, yet not absolutely necessary, at that stage of human development. For an almost exact contemporary of Dante, Marsilius of Padua, refused almost as plainly as Machiavelli would have refused to be chained down to any pre-judged conclusion ; Marsilius, however, wrote only in Latin, and moreover he was little read.[1] Of those men who, like Dante, wrote their best works in the vernacular, we cannot fairly expect more than that they should add to their medieval heritage some real gleanings from classical antiquity, and that free thought should come in, not systematically, but just here and there in a cynical aside, perhaps only half serious. We find such asides in Chaucer's poetry ; Langland again, tells us of

MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 12. *The Sire de Chastel Morant gives the King the three years' truce accorded by Richard II of England.* (M. cliv, p. 388)

[1] He has been far more quoted than read even down to the present day. Dr. C. W. Previte-Orton has been the first, and that only within the last few months, to bring out an edition of the *Defensor Pacis* which is not only accurate, prefaced and annotated, but also within the means of a private scholar to buy for himself.

MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 12b. *The Marriage of Louis d'Anjou, King of Naples and Sicily, to the daughter of King Peter of Aragon.* (M. clv, p. 388)

this as a fashionable mood among great folk ; Petrarch bears still more emphatic testimony to free-thinking in Venice ; Boccaccio and Sacchetti, in Florence ; and we shall see from Froissart what was the outlook natural to a citizen of the great trading and manufacturing towns of Flanders. Learning and thought, which in the Dark Ages had found their main refuge in the cloister, and which, even at the crown of the Middle Ages, had scarcely found full literary expression outside the ranks of the higher clergy, were now, in the fourteenth century, descending into the market-place. Migne's *Patrologia Latina* (that wonderful collection of more than 200 closely-printed volumes which, if printed less closely and cheaply, would amount to the same number of folios) stops short practically at the year 1200. A glance at the index volume in which this multitude of authors are classed by their social status reveals one startling fact ; not only is there scarcely a single page by a layman, but scarcely anything even from the millions of ordinary clergy who had lived and died during all those Christian centuries. Even when we confine our examination to the monastic clergy, we find that authorship is beyond comparison more frequent among abbots, priors and the higher officials, than among the far more numerous body of

MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 19b. *The joust between Pierre de Courtenay and the Sire de Clary.* (M. clvii, p. 392)

ordinary monks. Outside the cloister, this contrast is still more striking ; it is difficult to find anything whatever by any writer below the status of dean, chancellor or archdeacon. That, however, is only one side of the truth for which we possess many converging lines of evidence, that the average medieval priest knew very little outside his missal and breviary, if indeed he knew those ; and therefore that the laity in great towns were beginning, long before the fourteenth century, to overflow the old ecclesiastical limits. The Crusades had quickened human intercourse ; trade and commerce quickened it even more. England was, in these respects, still the least advanced of the great European countries ; yet in England also men were beginning, in Froissart's time, to say to each other what, for nearly two centuries past, they had been saying more and more frequently and openly in the great cities of Lombardy

meulx aduisee et si remercie
& vostre dame ſeu eſt moult grande
& bourbon et monſeigneur &
ment acquitte & vous adier.
¶ Le ſeigneur de clary re
tendu pour vous. Et auſſi la
ſpondy en telle maniere et dyſt
contesse de ſanct pol car la bon
Grans merciz a meſſeigneurs
mais ie audoie auoir bien

MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 23b. *The jousts of St. Inglevert.* (M. clviii ?, p. 392)

MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 29b. *The Comte de Foix does homage to the King of France.* (M. clx, p. 396)

and Tuscany, and in the fairs of Champagne, and along that splendid Rhine which was the greatest of all Western trade routes in the Middle Ages. It is no mere chance that the English mystics of the fourteenth century and the early Lollards, their contemporaries, were nearly all from London or the Eastern Counties or the Eastern Midlands ; that is, from the parts to which Florentine merchants came regularly every year to buy wool for their looms, and where the quays and warehouses were piled with iron and brass-ware and pottery and glass from Cologne or Flanders.

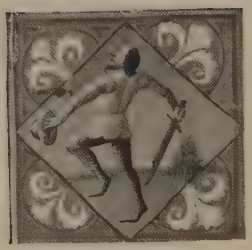
The thirteenth century had witnessed a great revival in literature and art, and, especially, great popularization on both those sides, and a consequent spread of the lay spirit. The Waldensians, who may be called the Wesleyans of the later twelfth century, were all or almost all layfolk, and their attempts to spread

the vernacular Bible were such as, even by the unwilling confession of their adversaries, put the orthodox to shame. The contemporary Humiliati at Milan, beginning in orthodoxy, soon got out of hand and ended, like the Waldensians, by popularizing ideas of private judgment in religion. The Franciscans combated these new movements even more successfully, by showing the world a better way, than by adding their inquisitorial energies to those of the Dominicans. But again, among these early Franciscans, the large majority were lay folk, with nothing clerical about them except their tonsure and the privilege of their Rule and their zeal for religion. The very frock to which the Franciscans clung with an almost superstitious reverence was originally just a poor peasant's natural dress. Even after they had made recruits among the

MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 32b. *The King riding out of Montpellier.*
(M. clxi, p. 397)

MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 34. *The Coronation of Pope Boniface IX.* (M. clxii, p. 399)

greatest of University teachers, the large majority were missionaries rather of the Bunyan or Whitefield stamp. They called themselves *joculatores Dei*—not only "minstrels of God" but "buffoons of God," for the word *joculator* comprises both ideas—and they appealed to the multitude through what we should call nowadays the art of the picture-palace. St. Francis had aimed not only at sharing poverty with the poor, but also at sharing simple amusements with them, and drawing them to religion through their common tastes: like Charles Wesley, in later days, the early friars did not wish that the Devil should have all the best tunes. Once, at least, St. Francis took his text from a love-poem of the day, and one of his most gifted musical successors turned a current love-song into a hymn. This new leaven had been working for some four generations in the world, when Froissart was born. That later fourteenth century produced a sudden crop of citizen-authors, employing the vernacular not only in prose but in poetry also. Giovanni Villani was born about 1275, his brother Matteo not long after and his son Filippo perhaps in 1310; Petrarch in 1304, Boccaccio in 1313; and then, half a generation later, came a whole group who were born about 1330 or 1340—Chaucer, Langland, Gower, the great translator Trevisa, Froissart, Eustache Deschamps, Sacchetti, and the town-clerk of Limburg, who wrote in German that truly Herodotean chronicle of his native city. Therefore it was perfectly natural that the great chronicler of fourteenth-century chivalry should be a citizen's son, and a not too priestly priest; also, that he should write, not in Latin, but in his native French, for the sake of upper-class readers in France and England who could have made very little of any Latin history.



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Froissart was born at Valenciennes in or about 1337. Not only in his *Chronicles,* but in several of his lighter pieces of verse, he has told us a great deal about himself. We can construct from his different writings an autobiography which forms one of our most precious documents for literary life in the Middle Ages. At school (he tells us) he was as little interested in his lessons as the rest, yet he loved " balades " and " rondeaux," the songs written as accompaniments to dance. He fought with his school-fellows, beat or was beaten, and earned additional stripes for the state of his person when he came home. His real interest was in the little girls who sat on the benches with him—for co-education was common in elementary schools of the Middle Ages—" those who were little girls when I was a boy." He competed for their good graces with little gifts of " pins, or apples, or pears, or just a little ring of glass." And, meanwhile, precociously stimulated by the balades and rondeaux " I began to think within myself, ' when, then, will the time come for me, the time when I shall be able to love *par amours?* ' " He had not long to wait ; apparently it came " before I was weary of playing as a child of twelve plays." In actual age, he tells us he was not yet turned fourteen, and for ten years this remained

MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 36. *The surrender of Ventadour.*
(M. clxiii, p. 399)

his grand passion ; he recounts it at length, no doubt with considerable poetic licence, in his poem of *L'Espinette Amoureuse*—" The Thorn-Bush of Love." He met her first in a garden ; in the month of May, of course, and at the hour of prime; in plain prose, about 6 a.m. ; we all know from our Chaucer that there was a great deal of daylight-saving in those days. She was reading the romance of *Cleomades* ; her colour was fresh, her eyes " green " (i.e., Chaucer's " grey as glass ") and her hair blonder than flax. They read together ; she begged, " young man, I pray you lend me some romance to read," and he offered his copy of *The Bailiff of Love*. Into this he slipped a " little song " of his own. In due time she returned, with many thanks, the *Chansonnette* no less conscientiously than the book. " Ha ! Ha ! said I, here is a strange thing ; this fair damsel has left the balade where I placed it ! " He was destined to see stranger things still, if we may believe him. before he came to the end of that first and greatest love. He offered her once a rose : " Take it, *par amours* " : but, " Nay, it is in good hands ; leave it where it is." At the dance " I held her finger and secretly I pressed it." I suggested that we should go and sit it out ; " If I had time to speak, and we two were alone, I would speak to you on my faith." and she looked a moment at me, but so as that none should observe it, and said ' would you so indeed ? would you love me with good sense ? ' And therewith she arose and said ' Let us dance on : there is a pastime wherein I find no weariness.' " Froissart did indeed bribe her maid and obtain her mirror, in which he could contemplate at leisure his own disconsolate face ; but he got no farther. Her marriage did not end the romance ; we read of fever and of doctors' bills ; elsewhere again, of charming picnics, with " pasties and hams and wine and venison " ; but, in the end, his pursuit wearied her ; and when he once ventured upon " sit by my side, *douce amie*," she replied tartly " *Point d'amie ci pour vous*," and sat pointedly elsewhere. Then, " what did she ? ye shall know. Passing by me, she caught me by my *toupet*—my front locks—so vigorously that more than three hairs dwelt in her hand, thus she went home without a word, and I sat there pensively sad." Yet all this, he feels, helped to make a man of him ; looking back upon it, in later age, a bald and disillusioned courtier, he ends practically with the moral of *You never Can Tell*—" I'd do it again, sir—I'd do it again ! "

But here we are anticipating ; the end of this romance came when Froissart was only 23. He was in orders, but not yet in major orders ; that is, he was in that large class of medieval clerics who took the tonsure in more or less definite hope of higher preferment, and who, meanwhile, could pick up a living as parish clerks (after the fashion of Chaucer's Absalom) or, as Langland tells us of himself, by singing morning and evening service for the dead, or, like Chaucer's devoted Hoccleve, by scribbling all day on an office stool, or, with greater luck, by living on some great man. Froissart was one of this most fortunate class ; in 1361, he came over to London and presented queen Philippa with a poem which he had composed on the battle of Poitiers. Philippa was not only from his native Hainault, but even from the same city, Valenciennes ; and Froissart's poem, seconded no doubt by personal charm and courtly tact,

MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 64. *The execution of Aymerigot Marcel.* (M. clxvi, p. 399)

earned him a five years' sojourn at what was then the most brilliant court in Europe ; for there were not only the English nobility, but a large proportion of the French. Mary Darmesteter sums up without exaggeration : " London contained, in those days, at least sixty great personages from France, either as prisoners or as hostages. The captive king was surrrounded by four dukes of royal blood, half-a-dozen counts, more than a score of rich barons, a whole crowd of mere knights and squires and thirty-six distinguished citizens, sent as hostages by the great towns of Northern and Midland France : each brought his own meinie with him, and kept great state in his exile ; Philip of Orleans alone had sixteen servants." These prisoners, trusted on parole, came to court, hunted or hawked with their captors, and found in the French tongue a bond between the aristocracy of both countries. To quote again, we must imagine Froissart's London " not as a desolate place of exile, but rather as a great town of modern times during some important international congress."

Here were splendid opportunities for a young man of Froissart's insatiable curiosity. Here he found himself in daily converse with the protagonists in one of the greatest of all European dramas of the Middle Ages, the Hundred Years' War, already a quarter of a century old and marked not only by an infinity of smaller dramas, but by two of the most remarkable victories, in the face of desperate odds, that are recorded in all history. We know from Froissart's own pen how he welcomed such opportunities not only later on at Foix, when after many years he struck a fresh mine of information, but also with what even greater avidity, if greater could be, he sucked in all that could be learned from these great warriors. We see him like Boswell, note-book in hand, always ready to report the frank narrator over his cups, or even, if need be, to pump the reticent witness. He was intimate with Chaucer's fellow-ambassador Sir Richard Stury, and mentions that Chaucerian embassy quite casually (p. 205) ; yet here, as later on at Milan, he is curiously reticent. He can scarcely have been ignorant that there was at Edward's court a maker of " balades, roundels, virelayes " even more fertile than himself ; a young man who owed his rank as squire at the court of Lionel of Clarence to those same qualities which gained Froissart his secretaryship to Philippa. But few men of letters, in any age, have been exempt from quiet literary jealousies ; Chaucer himself is strangely silent on the subject of Boccaccio from whom he borrowed so much, and probably we do no injustice to Froissart in suggesting that he thought the other lion a bore. Rivalry is pressing enough in days when popularity is more anonymous ; when a best-seller whose novel goes off in 30,000 copies before the day of publication is eclipsed by another who can boast 40,000 buyers, unknown to him either by sight or by name. It was still keener in the Middle Ages, when the two authors competed for the favour of a single great man or a small aristocratic group ; when one might sit daily above the salt and another below ; when one might have a purse thrown to him across the table, or be endowed, as Chaucer was in later days, with a daily gallon-pitcher of wine to be fetched from the royal buttery at a moment when his wineless competitor, perhaps, was crossing the courtyard. Few scrambles

MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 99. *Knights and Ladies riding to the Tournament in London.* (M. clxix, p. 404)

MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 104b. *The raising of the siege of the Strong Town of Afrique.* (M. clxx, p. 404)

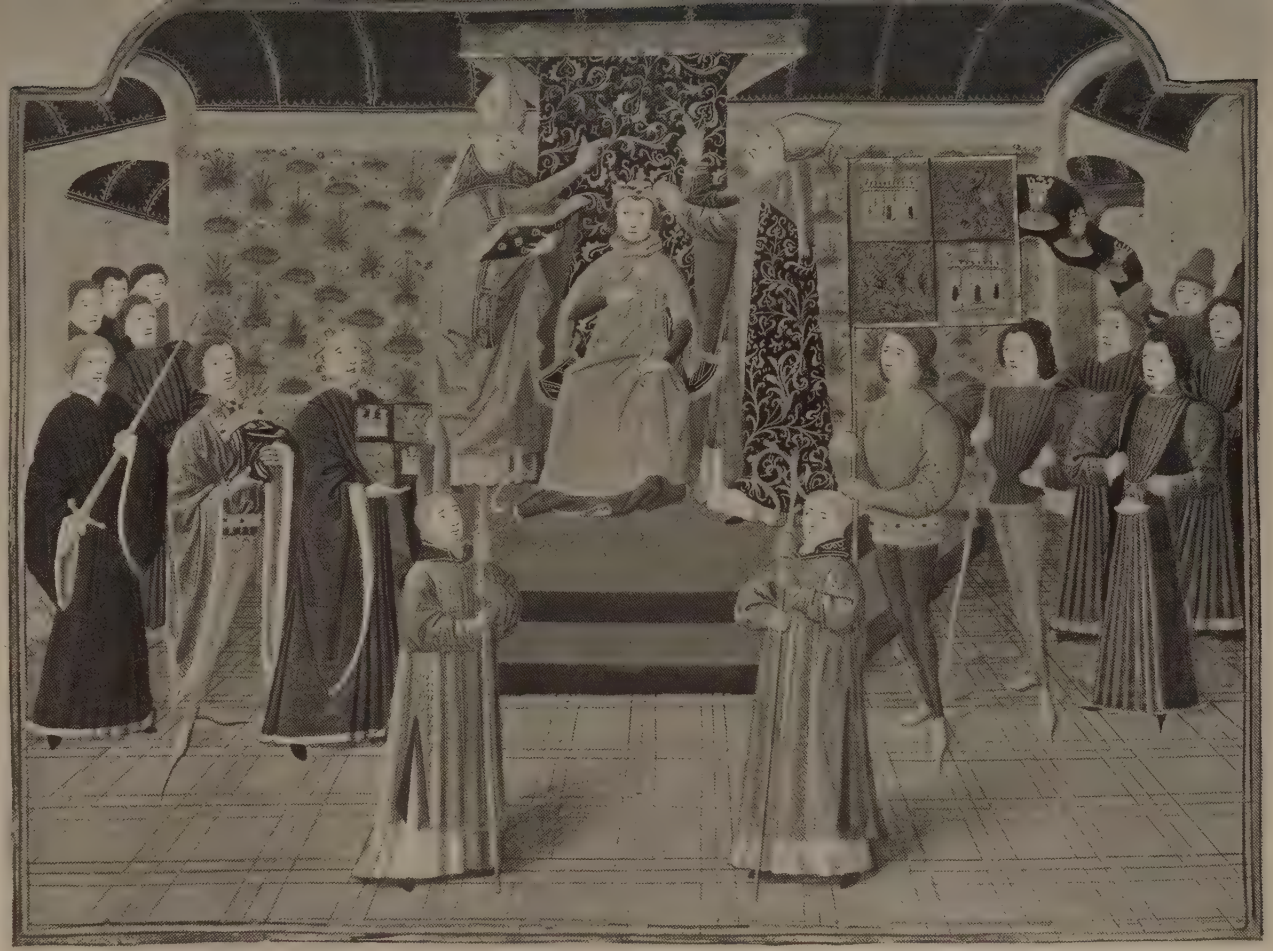
are more desperate than the scrambles for the leavings of a feast: we have bitter comments on this from the pen of the thirteenth century trouvère Rutebeuf; he knows well the house where they welcome you on Monday, and on Tuesday kick you out in favour of some hated rival. Froissart, however, basked for five whole years in this sunshine of royal favour. "I could not tell nor recount, no, not in a whole day's talk, those noble dinners and suppers and feasts, those joyous meetings, those gifts and guerdons and jewels that were freely given."

It was as official chronicler that Froissart earned all this; he had set himself now to tell the whole story of the Hundred Years' War. For the earlier days, the days when he was in his cradle or absorbed in "the games that children play till they are twelve years old," he is dependent mainly on the very valuable

MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 109b. *The English Ambassadors received by the French King.* (M. clxxi, p. 404)

chronicle of Jean le Bel, a canon of Liège whose ecclesiastical status stood in the way neither of his fighting doughtily in the wars, nor of his founding a family. Two of the most famous passages in all Froissart belong entirely to Jean le Bel—his description of the Scottish methods of warfare (p. 16) and the story of the citizens of Calais (p. 114).[2] Naturally, however, Froissart was able to supplement his predecessor's work with information gleaned by himself at the English court. It is equally natural that the whole of this five

[2] Wherever I give a page reference without further note, this is to G. C. Macaulay's edition of Lord Berners's translation.



MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 112b. *The Coronation of King Henry of Castile.* (M. clxxii, p. 404)

MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 113. *The expedition of Count Jehan d'Armagnac to Lombardy in aid of Barnabò Visconti.* (M. clxxiii, p. 405)

years' work, this first instalment of the *Chronicles*, should be strongly pro-English in tone. He remained in high favour at the English court until the Queen's death in August 1369. During the latter years of this period, he travelled much, certainly sometimes and probably always with royal letters of recommendation and protection. He was sent on a mission to Scotland ; incidentally, he tells us how he rode on a grey horse with a white greyhound in leash, and gives us a dainty poetical dialogue between the horse and the hound ; on this occasion he rode nigh over all the realm of Scotland ; he stayed a fortnight with the great Douglas, and saw that son, then "a fair young child," who was destined to fall at Otterbourn. At another time (probably on his way back from Scotland) he saw much of Lord Despencer, son of the Earl who had lost his head in rebellion against Edward II (p. 10). More than once, as they rode along, Despencer would point to the white towers of some city or

castle in the distance :—

" Froissart, seest thou that great town with the tall steeple ? "

" Yes, my lord, but what of that ? "

" I say it because that town should of right be mine. But there was in this land an evil queen who took it from us."[3] This, of course, was Isabella, the " she-wolf of France," expiating her real or supposed crimes, year in, year out, in the keep of Castle Rising, but less strictly confined than Froissart's own words would lead us to suppose.[4]

In 1366 Froissart travelled, under the Queen's protection, to Gascony ; and he was at Bordeaux on Twelfth-night 1367, when the Marshal of Aquitaine came to him, at table, and bade him record the birth of " a fair son " to the Black Prince ; this was the future Richard II. He followed the Prince to the Pyrenees ; but from Dax he was sent back to England. Next year, he again accompanied Lord Despencer, this time in the train of Lionel of Clarence,

MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 122. *Messire Pierre de Craon received by the Duke of Brittany.* (M. clxxiv, p. 407)

[3] Cf. p. 106.

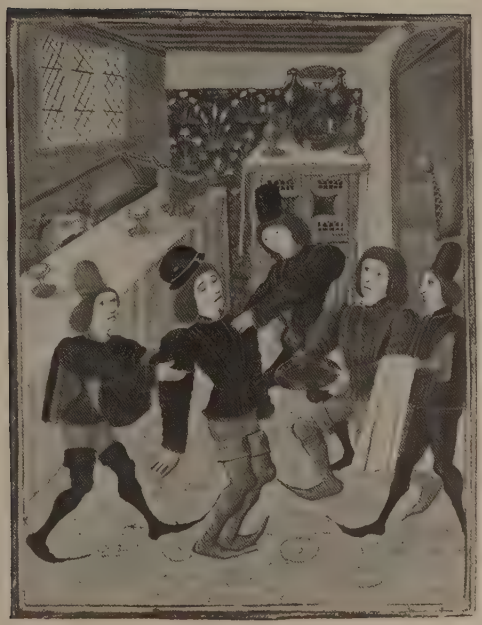
[4] P. 23 ; cf. H. J. Hillen, *Hist. of King's Lynn*, p. 93.

the Queen's second son, who went to wed Violante Visconţi at Milan. These Visconti were typical of the despots who, for some generations past, had been gradually rising to dominance in the city-republics of Northern Italy.[5] This family produced, in succession, ten heads of great ability, from 1277 to 1402. They gradually usurped the whole of Lombardy from other despots who had gained power in different cities—Milan, Padua, etc. The cruellest, perhaps, of the whole line was that Bernabò whose fate Chaucer bewails in his *Monk's Tale*.

'Of Melan, grete Barnabo Viscounte
God of delit, and scourge of Lumbardye . . .
Thy brother sone, that was thy double allye,
For he thy nevewe was and sone-in-lawe,
Withinne his prisoun made thee to dye.'

MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 125b. *The death of Count Louis de Chastillon.* (M. clxxv, p. 407)

[5] A full and interesting study is to be found in A. S. Cook, *The last months of Chaucer's Earliest Patron.* (New Haven, Connecticut, 1916.)



MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 126. *The sudden death of the Count de Foix.* (M. clxxvi, p. 407)

Yet this Bernabò, in the days of his power, had nearly 40 bastards living at one time. He and his brother had proclaimed not only death, but 41 days of torture first, for any conspirator against their rule. He kept 5,000 hunting dogs, we are told, whom it was death to touch: we can discount these figures only by ordinary medieval exaggeration. This man tried, first by poison and then by other means, to deprive his nephew Gian Galeazzo of his father's inheritance. The nephew, feigning extreme fear, suddenly caught his uncle in a trap, arrested him, and made away with him in prison (1385). Machiavellianism was regularly practised in Italy long before Machiavelli preached it; and this Gian Galeazzo, though personally a notorious coward, became one of the greatest rulers of his time. The Visconti had, in 1360, bought a French princess for Gian Galeazzo for 600,000 florins; they now bought Lionel of Clarence, Chaucer's master, at something like the same price. The wedding, one of the most magnificent in history, ended sadly enough; Lionel died soon after (1378); and the English, suspecting poison, harried Piedmont in revenge. This, perhaps, is why Froissart tells us so little: neither has he

anything of interest to say concerning Rome, whither he went on from Milan. Then, suddenly, the good Queen Philippa died (August 15, 1369). "She was the gentlest queen, the freest and most courteous, that ever reigned in her day"; "I firmly believe that the holy angels of Paradise carried her soul to the glory of heaven; for never in her life did she think any thought that should lose her that glory." Clarence was gone, the Black Prince was sick of his last sickness; Edward III was dominated now by Alice Perrers and a hungry crowd of adventurers who would look with scant favour on the foreign Queen's favourites.

MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 135b. *The meeting of the King of France and the Duke of Brittany at Tours.* (M. clxxvii, p. 408)

MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 142b. *The Count of Blois and his wife, Marie de Namur, dictating the deed of sale of the County of Blois.* (M. clxxviii, p. 408)

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Froissart, therefore, drifted back to his native Valenciennes; there is no sign that he was ever of a saving disposition, and it is probable that he felt himself now very definitely under a cloud. He joined the guild of "couletiers," by which one scholar would have us understand that he was a money-changer's clerk, and another that he was a breeches-maker; but from which, in our present state of knowledge, we can draw no more definite conclusion than what he himself tells us elsewhere, "I went into business"—*je me suis mis dans la marchandise*. We are on firm ground again about 1373; by that time Froissart had finished the First Book of his *Chronicles*, "at the instance and request of a dear lord of mine, Robert of Namur, knight, lord of Beaufort, to whom entirely I owe love and obeisance; and God grant me to do that thing that may be to his pleasure." Robert was nephew to Queen Philippa, and

MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 146. *The King of France in Council at Amiens.* (M. clxxx, p. 408)

MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 145. *Rogièr d'Espaigne and Espaing de Lyon welcomed at Toulouse.* M. ? p. 396)

more friendly to the English cause than any other man in Flanders ; naturally, therefore, his First Book lost nothing of its English tone through his patronage. Presently, however, two definitely French influences came in. The first was that of Count Guy de Blois, nephew of Charles de Blois who long defended his claim to the throne of Brittany against the English, who fell at the great defeat of Auray, and whom the Church canonized afterwards as a Saint. It was Guy who presented Froissart to the fat living of Lestinnes ; the vague prospects of the young clerk in minor orders crystallized thus into something tangible and durable ; he is now curé of a parish close by his patron's castle of Beaumont, and not far from another castle belonging to another patron, Wenceslas Duke of Luxemburg and Brabant, son to that blind King of

MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 152b. *The attack on Olivier de Clisson by the followers of Pierre de Craon.* (M. clxxxi, p. 408)

Bohemia who died fighting for France at Crecy. Froissart's romance of Meliador, lost for many years and rediscovered in our own time by a mixture of luck and skill which forms one of the most romantic episodes in literary history, was composed for Wenceslas, who was himself a lyric poet after the fashion of Prince Charles of Orleans. Froissart, to please his patron, wove a long story of adventure into which the Duke's lyrics were set. Here, therefore, was the second definitely French influence; and Froissart began to re-write his First Book in a very different tone from that first redaction. But the second version (as so often happens in literary history) has not the vigour of the first; one feels that it was written to order, in spite of a few brilliant touches which have been freshly introduced. Froissart extols Guy and Wenceslas as the two most generous princes of his day, "living freely and honestly from their own revenues, without oppressing or making war against their subjects." But Wenceslas died in 1383, in the flower of his age.

At Lestinnes, our chronicler tells us, he spent more than fifty pounds a

year in wine; the equivalent of some £200 a year at the present day. His book of *Chronicles* made him famous; manuscripts were multiplied, and other patrons came to his help. In a poem of 1373, he enumerates those he has already had: Edward and Philippa, their daughter Isabel and her husband the Sire de Coucy; the Duke and Duchess of Brabant, Albert Duke of Bavaria, Louis, John, and Guy, Lords of Blois, Count Amadeus of Savoy, the King of Scotland, and the Earls of Douglas, Mar, March, Sutherland and Fife.

The same year which saw the death of Wenceslas carried off Guy's surviving brother Louis; he thus inherited the whole family possessions; lands in Holland, Zeeland, Hainault, and Picardy, and the great county of Blois.[6] This brought promotion to Froissart, who became Guy's private chaplain, and canon of the collegiate Church of Chimay.

MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 160. *The French King's expedition to Brittany.* (M. clxxxiv, p. 412)

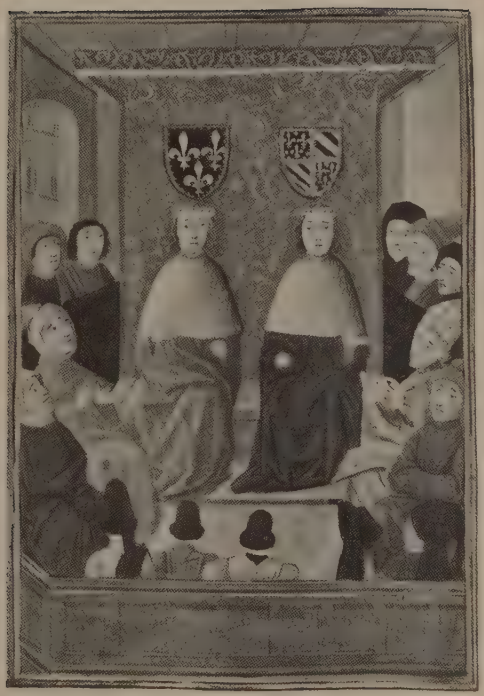
[6] The Louis de Chastillon whose death appears in our miniature, p. 34, was not Guy's brother, but his nephew.

In 1384, he entered into still closer relations with Albert of Bavaria, one of his earliest patrons and destined to be his latest. Albert was Count of Holland and Zeeland, and Lord of Friesland; he came and spent the winter of 1385 at his castle of Le Quesnoy, not far from Valenciennes; and here our chronicler doubtless waited assiduously upon him. The connexion was destined to prove even more profitable than it had promised from the first; for, in 1389, his half-niece Isabel of Bavaria was married to Charles VI of France (p. 383). But, for the present, Guy was Froissart's chief patron, and he spent most of his time at Blois, in that splendid castle on the Loire where his master was living in almost royal splendour. As it was for Guy that Froissart re-wrote his First book, so for him also he wrote the Second and Third, and began the Fourth.

But there came an intervening episode, one of the most interesting in Froissart's life, and one of the most fruitful for his literary work. We shall come back to it later in detail; for the present it is only necessary to note that, in 1388, he made up his mind to complete his historical information by a journey southwards. Hitherto he had recounted the Great War preponderantly from the northern point of view; what he has told us about battles and politics has mostly been from this side of the Loire. But there had been great deeds of arms, and wild hazards, and exciting reverses of fortune in Gascony also; indeed, the siege of Aiguillon is one of the greatest stories in the book. He knew those things from the general English point of view, but not, in most cases, from the mouth of men who had been principal actors on the scene. Yet there, at Orthez, at the foot of the Pyrenees, was a great lord, a patron of art and letters, Gaston de Foix, who had already some of the characteristics which we associate with the princes of the Renaissance. So, in this autumn of 1388, Froissart went down to Orthez with letters from Guy which brought him as pleasant a welcome, for six months, from Gaston, as from any earlier patron. But a man of letters must not presume upon the favours of the great; and when, in March 1389, the young Duchess of Berry left the court of Orthez to join her new husband in Auvergne, Froissart took the opportunity of joining this august caravan.[7] On their way through Avignon, he bought at the Papal Court the next presentation to a canonry at Lille, to be added to that of Chimay; it was a bad bargain, for he remained a canon in expectation only. From Auvergne, after the first festivities were over, he returned by easy stages to Guy of Blois in his northern castle of Schoonhoven.

But Guy, who had once been so brave and active a warrior, was now running rapidly to seed. Eustace Deschamps, the French poet who was Chaucer's friend and panegyrist, celebrates the Count as a gargantuan eater and drinker; and Froissart himself confesses sadly: "This Count of Blois, and Marie de Namur his wife, by reason of free drinking and much eating of sweet and

[7] Gaston de Foix died suddenly, not many years later; Froissart describes the tragedy, which seems to point plainly to heart disease (p. 407; see miniature, p. 35).



MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 170b. *The Dukes of Berry and Burgundy in Council.* (M. clxxxv, p. 419)

delectable viands, had, to their mischief, grown passing "fat." Worse still, Guy's extravagance led him deeper and deeper into debt; and, before his death in 1397, he was driven to sell his County of Blois, a step of terrible import in those days, when the emphasis upon caste and privilege treated the sale of one's heritage not merely as a social and economic offence, but almost as a crime before God (p. 408; miniature, p. 38). Albert now became our chronicler's main patron; when, in 1394, he made up his mind to visit England again, it was not Guy who furnished the means, but the Duke of Bavaria, his son, the Duchess of Brabant, and the Sire de Coucy (p. 423). It is not without significance to note that Albert and his son, as Knights of the Garter, had their right of seat at the Round Table of Windsor Castle; thus Froissart came again under pro-English influence.

He came to us under high patronage and with great hopes: but it is perilous to renew old memories after twenty-seven years; and in many ways, as we shall see later on, he was sadly disappointed (p. 424). "I had engrossed in a fair book, well enlumined, all the matters of amours and moralities that in four and twenty years before I had made and compiled, which greatly quickened my desire to go into England to see King Richard, who was son to the noble prince of Wales and of Acquitaine, for I had not seen this King Richard sith he was christened in the cathedral church of Bordeaux . . . Also I had this said fair book well covered with velvet garnished with clasps of silver and gilt, thereof to make a present to the king at my first coming to his presence. I had such desire to go this voyage, that the pain and travail grieved me nothing. Thus provided of horses and other necessaries, I passed the sea at Calais and came to Dover the twelfth day of the month of July. When I came there, I found no man of my knowledge, it was so long sith I had been in England, and the houses were all newly changed, and young children were become men and women, who knew me not, nor I them."

Richard was moving from place to place, very busy with great affairs; among these was that question of his second marriage, for which at this time he was sending an embassy to France (p. 429; miniature, p. 77). Froissart, therefore, rode on and on in his train, from day to day, finding, as usual, pleasant companions, upon whom we may be sure he exercised all his charms; he mentions specially the lord William de Lisle and Jean de Grailly, a distinguished Gascon (p. 426, miniature, p. 63). At last, by good chance, he met with an old acquaintance from his last English visit of nearly thirty years ago. This was Sir Richard Stury, who had once been Chaucer's fellow-ambassador: him he met "walking in the galleries at Eltham Palace, where it was very pleasant and shady; for those galleries were then covered with vines" (p. 430). "And the lord Thomas Percy and Sir Richard Stury showed my business to the king. Then the king desired to see my book that I had brought for him; so he saw it in his chamber, for I had laid it there ready on his bed. When the king opened it, it pleased him well, for it was fair enlumined and written, and covered with crimson velvet, with ten buttons of silver and gilt, and roses of gold in the midst, with two great clasps gilt, richly wrought. Then the king

MS. Harl. 4379, Fol. 182b. *The proclamation of the Truce between France and England.* (M. clxxxvii, p. 419)

demanded me whereof it treated, and I shewed him how it treated matters of love ; whereof the king was glad and looked in it and read it in many places, for he could speak and read French very well. And he took it to a knight of his chamber named Sir Richard Credon, to bear it into his secret chamber."[8]

But, among other things, those political discontents were already brewing which were destined soon to cost Richard his throne ; and, naturally, nearly all Froissart's old friends or patrons in England were dead. After eighteen months, he went back to Hainault, where he apparently remained for most of his remaining years, writing and re-writing. There is a third redaction of his *Chronicles*, surviving in a single manuscript at Rome, which again is far less pro-English than the first ; he writes with great and natural freedom in criticism of the people who had allowed Henry of Lancaster to take the crown from Richard, grandson to his first and greatest patron Philippa, and courteous himself to Froissart on that visit of 1394. Apparently our author lived at least to the end of 1404, when Albert of Bavaria died. We have every reason to hope that this man of equable temper, who shows even in his last redaction little that can be called actual bitterness, looked back upon life in general as he had looked back on his early love affairs, without regret :—

What is he buzzing in my ears ?
" Now that I come to die,
Do I view this world as a vale of tears ? "
Ah, reverend sir, not I !

Mrs. Darmesteter suggests that he may have ended his life at a house of his own in Valenciennes, or at his patron's castle of Le Quesnoy ; yet some of us may cling still to the suggestion of his first scientific editor, Baron Kervyn de Lettenhove, that the true home of his later years would have been his official lodging, as Treasurer, in the Canons' Close at Chimay. Here, as Mrs. Darmesteter quotes from Kervyn, " houses in the cloister behind the collegiate church were reserved for the Canons, free of rent and taxes. Short flights of steps led up to these lodgings ; and each had a little garden in front. The windows looked out upon a deep ravine, with a stretch of rich meadow land at the bottom, and the shadow of ancient oaks. This fresh landscape heightened the effect of this silent and sequestered retreat. There was a Dean and twelve Canons, and a Treasurer whose perquisites included all the offerings of wax at funerals. He had a court of justice of his own, for all except felonies and cases of primary importance. There was a mayor in the little town, who was under Froissart's immediate authority." All this, at any rate, Froissart might have enjoyed if he had wished ; that much is documentarily certain ; and, if in fact he preferred the city or the castle, this would be in virtue of the principle which we may often read between the lines of his prose or his verse—the best of everything is good enough for me.

[8] See miniature, p. 61.

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 4. *Pope Boniface IX sends a friar to the King of France.* (M. clxxxix, p. 421)

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol 6. *The marriage of Philipe d'Artois, Comte d'Eu, and Marie, daughter of the Duc de Berry.* (M. clxxxix, p. 421)

4

We have now enumerated most of Froissart's patrons, and have followed him through his main wanderings, omitting a few minor excursions of which we have record and, doubtless, many more that are unrecorded. Let us now see what literary use he made of all these chances; for there is no life which casts so clear a light upon the making of a medieval author.

Again and again he assures us of the trouble he took to pick up information; and, incidentally, of the multiplicity of sources from which he was compelled to draw the moneys that a man of his tastes needed to keep him in comfort. There is a great contrast, in many respects, between the life of an artist and that of a man of letters in the Middle Ages. The artist was poorly paid according to modern ideas; for the Middle Ages, as a rule, recognized no distinction between *artist* and *artisan;* in more than one city, for instance, the painters' guild was simply a branch of the saddlers'. The artist, whether mason or sculptor, whitewasher or painter of figures, shoesmith or forger of delicate

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 10b. *The drawing up of the treaty between France and England.* (M. cxci, p. 421)

leafage in iron, was paid roughly at the rate of a modern chauffeur, with no great difference between highest and lowest rates; nor was his name widely known; nor did he enjoy a social consideration which might have made up for his lack of money.[9] It is true that Giotto died (in 1337) as a famous man, and that, in the previous generations, a few Italian sculptors or painters had enjoyed something of the same honour; but that was because, in Italy, the Renaissance was then already beginning. Chaucer has nothing to tell us of any contemporary artist, though he was long the business colleague of the most

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 18b. *The death of Pope Clement VII.*
(M. cxcii, p. 422)

[9] I have given details on this point in Chapter 5 of my *Art and the Reformation.*

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 20. *Jehan de Varennes preaching.*
(M. cxciii, p. 423)

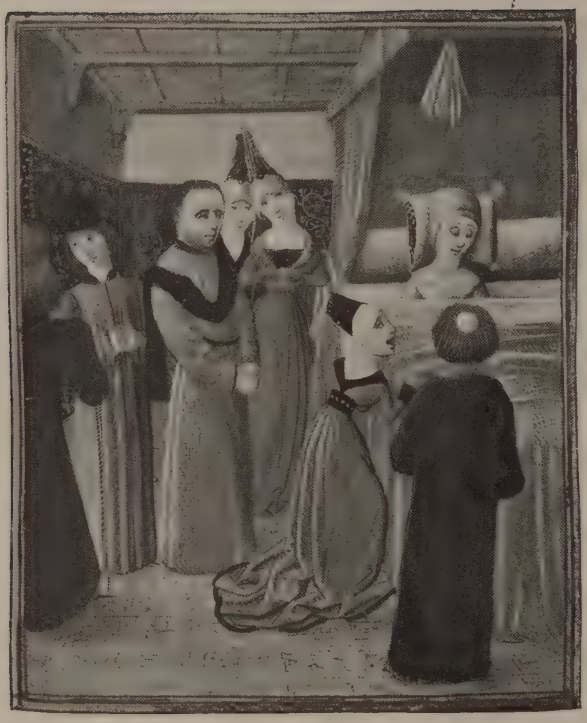
distinguished English architect of that day, Henry of Yevele. Froissart devotes a few lines to the greatest painter in France, André Beauneveu, but rather from the political than from the artistic standpoint[10] ; for aught we know, he may have esteemed André himself no higher than Swift esteemed Handel and Bononcini, whose rivalries seemed to him a story of Tweedledum and Tweedledee. On the other hand, if the artist was reckoned an artisan he got his regular artisan's wage, and seldom suffered more than other artisans' from unemployment. The Guild system ensured that each had gone through his seven years' apprenticeship, and that, before working for himself as master, he should have

[10] Ed. Buchon, vol. III, p. 74 ; ed. Berners 1812, vol. II, p. 492.

learned first to do what was usually done in the trade; moreover, even as master, he was strongly bound by trade and guild traditions. Therefore, while the medieval artist seldom did thoroughly bad work, it was impossible for him to show the highest originality; and none stands out above his fellows with the crushing superiority with which Dante, or even Chaucer, stand out in their own times.

In vernacular literature, on the other hand, there was nothing like a Guild system. For Latin, men were to some real extent guilded in the universities; but, in history or poetry, there was no apprenticeship, no standard of work could be enforced upon the beginner, no recognised rate of pay, and no security

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 21. *Richard II gives the Duchy of Aquitaine to the Duke of Lancaster.* (M. cxciv, p. 423)



MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 22. *The death of Anne of Bohemia.*
(M. cxcv, p. 423)

of employment. At about the date of Chaucer's birth, for instance, we find the Countess of Clare paying a translator the wages of an artisan, but just for a casual job. There was not only no copyright, but it may even be said that the whole system was based upon the absence of copyright. At the universities no master might refuse to lend his book to be copied at certain trade rates; in all fields of literature the plagiarist was as great a public benefactor as the pirate-publishers are nowadays to travellers on the Continent. The author, moreover, had to do his own advertising as best he could. Giraldus Cambrensis tells us how he advertised his great book on Ireland. He took it to Oxford, then the unquestioned centre of learning in England, hired lodgings, and spent three days reading the volume aloud to three different audiences, whom he supplied liberally with refreshments. "It was a noble and a costly act," he tells us; and he knows of no other author who has spent quite so much

on advertisement. Therefore, until the advent of printing, the author could have no public in the modern sense; in default of a patrimony of his own, or a lucrative office like Giraldus's, he must have a patron; or, better still, a multiplicity of patrons. Roughly speaking, we may call Petrarch the first man of letters in anything like the modern sense. From the public in general he gets nothing; but, by his mere distinction in literature, he attracts sufficient patronage to live in comfort, and even in a certain luxury. Froissart, as we have seen, collected more patrons, and more generous, than the great Petrarch himself.[11]

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 23b. *Froissart presents his book to Richard II.* (M. cxcvi, cxcvii, pp. 425 & 430)

[11] His words as to his own historical methods may be found on the following pages of Macaulay's edition: 1, 2, 309 ff, 329, 330, 336, 338-9, 356, 359, 368, 373, 382, 401, 405, 419, 423, 429-30.

Moreover, Froissart had one enormous advantage: his patrons and their courts supplied him even more richly with literary material than with money. This he tells us over and over again. He begins by confessing his debt to Jean le Bel for a great part of his earlier story, yet he hopes to improve sensibly upon his predecessor: "I will not forget, minish or abridge the history in anything for default of language, but rather I will increase and multiply it as near as I can, following the truth from point to point."

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 27. *Froissart riding with Guillaume de Lisle and Jehan de Grailly.* (M. cxcvii, p. 426)

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 34b. *Froissart riding with Henry Christead and others.* (M. cxcviii, p. 430)

5

But we see him best in character at Orthez, and on the journey thither. In his 52nd year, " considering in myself that there was no great deed of arms likely toward in the parts of Picardy or Flanders . . . and it greatly annoyed me to be idle, for I knew well that after my death this noble and high history should have great course, wherein divers noble men should have great pleasure and delight (and as yet, and thank God, I have understanding and remembrance of all things past, and my wit quick and sharp enough to conceive all things shewed unto me touching my principal matter, and my body as yet able to endure and to suffer pain) all things considered . . . to the intent to know the truth of deeds done in far countries, I found occasion to go to the high and mighty prince Gaston, earl of Foix and of Béarn . . . for thither resorted all manner of knights and strange squires, for the great nobleness of the said earl " (p. 310). So he went with Guy's letter of recommendation, and with presents for his new patron ; not only his romance of Méliador, but also four hunting-hounds. All the way, " I demanded and enquired of the news of that country, such as I knew not before." At Pamiers, he fell in by good fortune with one of the Count's best friends, Sir Espaing de Lyon, " a valiant and expert

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 43. *The Vision of Robert l'Ermite.*
(M. cc, p. 435)

man of arms about the age of fifty years.[12] And so I got me into his company, and he was greatly desirous to hear of the matters of France[13]; and so we were a six days in our journey or we came to Orthez; and this knight, every day after he had said his prayers, most part all the day after he conversed with me in demanding of tidings, and also when I demanded anything of him, he would answer me to my purpose." At Artigat, he told how the Gascons and English had stolen the town from France, posing as merchants during the fair time and decoying the gate-keepers with drink; "and there they slew them, so privily that none knew thereof," and let their companions in, "and so took all the men of the town, sitting drinking [after the fair], or else in their beds." The next story was of the same type, how the Bastard of Lourdes, with three companions, dressed like monks, "for well they had the habit and countenance of monks," and, joining a rich citizen on his journey, took him and ransomed him for 5,000 francs. "Ah, St. Mary" [said I], "was this Bastard such an expert man of arms?" "Yea, truly, sir" (quoth he) "and in war he died, in a place whereas we shall pass within these three days, in a country called the Laire in Bigorre, by a town called La Cieutat." "Well, sir" (quoth I) "and I shall remember you thereof when we come there." On the way they passed the Garonne in flood, at great peril in a small boat, and came to Cassères, where Sir Espaing pointed out a new portion of the town wall, and told by what deed of arms it had been broken down "a ten year past." And so on for two days more, past "many fair castles and fortresses," and with many tales of the wars, until on the second evening, "at supper time, the captain of Malvoisin, called Sir Raymond of Lane, came to see us and supped with us, and brought with him four flagons of the best wine that I drank of in all my journey. Those two knights talked long together; and when it was late the knight departed and returned to the castle of Malvoisin." Next day they came at last to the promised Laire, so wild a spot that "I beheld it well and advised the country, which seemed to me right strange; I thought myself but as lost there, if I had not been in the company of that knight." He reminded Sir Espaing of his promise, and was rewarded with one of the most brilliant battle-pieces in his whole book, a double fight of less than 500 men on either side, but such war-hardened veterans and so evenly matched that, as Sir Espaing boasted, the conflict could match that most famous of the whole century, the Thirty Bretons and the Thirty English.[14] The garrison of Lourdes had made a great foray and taken many cattle and prisoners; the French commander at Tarbes got wind of this, and rode out to intercept them before they could bring their booty home (p. 321). "And here [in the Pass of Laire, near Mascaras] they met with them of Lourdes; and when each of them saw

[12] Next year, 1389, Sir Espaing was one of the two principal envoys sent by the Count of Foix to Toulouse, where homage had to be done to the King of France (p. 396; see miniature, p. 41).

[13] The South, in those days, scarcely considered itself one country with the North; and, quite apart from this, there is still much provincial feeling. Almost in the memory of people still living, Norman peasants and workfolk, if they went to see relations beyond Pontoise or in Paris, would say they were going "into France."

[14] I have translated this story of the *Combat des Trente*, from the contemporary poem, on p. 294 of my *Social Life in Britain*.

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 48. *The liberation of the Seigneur de la Rivière and Messire Jehan le Merchier.* (M. cci, p. 435)

other, they alighted and made them ready to fight, and so came each against other crying their cries, " Saint George, Lourdes ! " and the other " Our Lady of Bigorre ! " And so there each came to other with hand strokes, foining with their spears each at other a great space : and so when each of them had a great space foined each at other, they cast down their spears and took their axes, and gave therewith each to other great and horrible strokes, every man with his match, and in that manner they fought together more than two hours. And when any of them had fought so long that they lacked breath, then they would fair and easily depart, and go sit down by a dike side that was full of water and put off their bassenets and refresh themselves ; and when they

were well refreshed, they put on their bassenets and returned again to fight. I believe there was not such a business, nor a battle so well fought sith the battle that was in Bretayne of thirty against as many, as this was here at Mascaras in Bigorre . . . They fought this day hand to hand, Ernaulton Bisette with the Bastard of Lourdes : they did many a feat of arms between them, and they fought so long, till they were so weary that they could aid themselves no longer ; and there was slain on the place two captains, the Bastard of Lourdes and on the other part Ernaulton Bisette. Then ceased the battle by agreement of both parties, for they were so weary that they could scant hold their axes in their hands : some unarmed them to refresh themselves and left their armour in the place. They of Lourdes bare away with them the

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 49. *The reconciliation of the Duke of Brittany with Olivier de Clisson.* (M. ccii, p. 435)

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 54. *The King of Hungary sends a letter to the King of France.* (M. cciii, p. 435)

Mongat slain, and the Frenchmen bare Ernaulton Bisette to Tarbes; and to the intent that this battle should be had in remembrance, whereas the two squires fought there was set a cross of stone. Behold yonder is the cross. And with those words we came to the cross, and there we said for their souls a *Pater noster* and an *Ave Maria*." Meanwhile the other detachment from Tarbes met the second half of the marauders from Lourdes, encumbered by their booty: "and I tell you truth, there was as sore a fight and as long endured or longer than that of Mascaras. "The hero of this fight was the Bastard of Spain;" for he was big and well made and not overcharged with much flesh. He took with his own hand the two captains, the Bastard of Cardeillac and Perrot Palatin of Béarn; and there was slain a squire of Navarre

called Ferrando of Miranda, who was an expert man of arms; some that were at the business said that the Bastard of Spain slew him, and some said that he was overcome for heat in his harness . . . 'Ah, St. Mary,' quoth I, 'is the Bastard of Spain so big a man as ye speak of.' 'Yea, truly,' quoth he, 'for in all Gascoyne there is none like him in strength of body, and therefore the Earl of Foix hath him ever in his company. It passed not a three year that he did in a sport a great deed, as as I shall shew you. So it was, on a Christmas day the Earl of Foix held a great feast and a plentiful of knights and squires, as it is his usage: and it was a cold day, and the earl dined in the hall, and with him great company of lords; and after dinner he departed out of the hall and went up into a gallery of twenty-four stairs of height, in which gallery there was a great chimney, wherein they made fire when the earl was there; and at that time there was but a small fire, for the earl loved no great fire; howbeit, he had wood enough there about and in Béarn is wood enough. The same day it was a great frost and very cold; and when the earl was in the gallery and saw the fire so little, he said to the knights and squires about him: "Sirs, this is but a small fire and the day so cold." Then Ernaulton of Spain went down the stairs, and beneath in the court he saw a great many of asses, laden with wood to serve the house. Then he went and took one of the greatest asses with all the wood, and laid him on his back, and went up all the stairs into the gallery and did cast down the ass with all the wood into the chimney and the ass's feet upwards; whereof the Earl of Foix had great joy, and so had all they that were there, and had marvel of his strength, how he alone came up all the stairs with the ass and the wood in his neck.' I took great pleasure in this tale and in other that this knight sir Espaing de Lyon shewed me, whereby I thought my journey much the shorter: and in shewing of these matters we passed the pass of Laire and the castle of Mascaras, whereas the battle was."

Here is but a sample of the tales that Froissart picked up on the journey itself; and "all these matters that sir Espaing de Lyon shewed me right well contented me; and every night as soon as we were at our lodgings, I wrote ever all that I heard in the day, the better thereby to have them in remembrance, for writing is the best remembrance that may be. And so we rode the next morning to Morlaas; but ere we came there, I said: 'Sir, I have forgot to demand of you'"....: and, once again, his inexhaustible curiosity was rewarded.

At last they came to the court of Orthez, and Froissart was welcomed as became the bearer of a letter from Guy de Blois, and of four noble hounds, and of the romance of Méliador and "all the songs, ballads, rondeaux and virelays, which the gentle duke [Wenceslas of Brabant] had made in his time, which by imagination I had gathered together; which book the earl of Foix was glad to see, and every night after supper I read thereon to him, and while I read, there was none durst speak any word, because he would I should be well understanded, wherein he took great solace, and when it came to any matters of question, then he would speak to me, not in Gascon but in good and fair French." The reading, however, was no sinecure, "for the Earl's

usage was always that it was high noon or he arose out of his bed, and supped ever at midnight," instead of the medieval dinner at ten in the morning and supper at five. Why he thus turned night into day, in spite of his general character of "right perfect in all things, and as sage and perceiving as any high prince in his days," Froissart at last learned, not without difficulty, for it was a tragic and perilous story: "Sir Espaing de Lyon would not show me anything thereof; and so much I enquired that an ancient squire and a notable man showed the matter to me." Gaston's wife was sister to the King of Navarre; and he began to suspect her of political treachery, in those difficult times when nearly all princes were at war with each other, and alliances were made and broken in kaleidoscopic fashion from month to month. "And so she tarried in Navarre and durst not return again," for fear of her husband. Her only son went to see her; the King of Navarre (so some believed) gave the boy a powder, professedly to restore his love for his wife but really to poison him; the boy's bastard brother Yvain discovered and disclosed the matter, and the father cast him into "dark chamber in the tower of Orthez." After ten days, during which the prisoner scarcely touched his food, the jailor came to report that he bade fair to die of starvation. "Of those words the earl was sore displeased, and without any word speaking went out of his chamber and came to the prison where his son was; and in an evil hour he had the same time a little knife in his hand to pare withal his nails. He opened the prison door and came to his son and had the little knife in his hand not an inch out of his hand, and in great displeasure he thrust his hand to his son's throat, and the point of the knife a little entered into his throat into a certain vein, and said: 'Ah, traitor, why dost thou not eat thy meat?' and therewith the earl departed without any more doing or saying and went into his own chamber. The child was abashed and afraid of the coming of his father and also was feeble of fasting, and the point of the knife a little entered into a vein of his throat, and so fell down sudenly and died. The earl was scant in his chamber, but the keeper of the child came to him and said: 'Sir, Gaston, your son is dead.' 'Dead!' quoth the earl, 'Yea truly, sir,' quoth he. The earl would not believe it, but sent thither a squire that was by him, and he went and came again and said: 'Sir, surely he is dead.' Then the earl was sore displeased and made great complaint for his son and said: "Ah, Gaston, what a poor adventure is this for thee and for me. In an evil hour thou wentest to Navarre to see thy mother. I shall never have the joy that I had before." Then the earl caused his barber to shave him, and clothed himself in black, and all his house, and with much sore weeping the child was borne to the Friars in Orthez and there buried."

Stranger still, if not so tragic at bottom, was the story of the Count's bastard brother, Sir Peter of Béarn, who was haunted by the ghost of a huge bear which, like a mighty hunter that he was, he had slain "with his sword of Bordeaux." The effect was, "that in the night time while he sleepeth, he will rise and arm himself and draw out his sword and fight all about the house and cannot tell with whom, and then goeth to bed again: and when he is waking,

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 58b. *William of Hainault setting out on his expedition against Friesland.* (M. cciv, p. 435)

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 60b. *The Parliament of Jehanne, Queen of Naples, pronounces sentence against Pierre de Craon.* (M. ccv, p. 435)

his servants do shew him how he did, and he would say he knew nothing thereof and how they lied. Sometime his servants would leave none armour nor sword in his chamber, and when he would thus rise and find none armour, he would make such a noise and rumour as though all the devils of hell had been in his chamber." This was most inconvenient to his wife, who, directly she saw the dead bear brought home, had swooned and taken a sickness which necessitated a pilgrimage to Compostella; for she recognized that this was the same beast which her father had once chased, and which had turned and spoken with a human voice, being probably some knight who "peradventure displeased [as he was hunting] some god or goddess, whereby he was transformed unto a bear, to do there his penance, as anciently Actaeon was changed unto an hart." In any case, the lady was convinced that her husband was bewitched, "that he shall die of an evil death, and that he doeth nothing as yet [in comparison]

to that he shall do hereafter." Therefore she prudently took on this pilgrimage her son, her daughter, and her jewels, and passed on to her cousin the King of Castile; "and there she is yet, and will not return again nor send her children."

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 62. *The Negotiations for the marriage of Richard II and Princess Isabella.* (M. ccvi, p. 435)

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 84. *The King of Hungary in Council.* (M. ccvi, p. 436)

6

But the supernatural reaches its climax in the story of the Lord of Corasse: a thing that "I have often thought of since, and shall do as long as I live . . . As this squire told me, that of truth the next day after the battle was thus fought at Juberoth the Earl of Foix knew it, whereof I had great marvel[15] . . . 'Saint Mary!' quoth I to the squire that showed me this tale, 'how is it that the Earl of Foix could know on one day what was done within a day or two before, being so far off?' . . . Then he drew me apart into a corner of the chapel at Orthez, and then began his tale." A certain knight, Raymond of Corasse, quarrelled with the priest of Corasse about the tithes, which were valued at a hundred florins a year; roughly, equal to £400 sterling of present-day value. The priest procured a papal judgement in his favour; the knight defied the pope, and, "for he was a cruel man," the priest departed leaving a curse behind him, that he would send his persecutor a more formidable champion than himself. Then, "when the knight thought least on him, about a three months after, as the knight lay on a night abed in the castle of Corasse with the lady his wife,

[15] The battle of Aljubarrota in Portugal, to which we shall come later on.

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 89. *The meeting of Richard II and Princess Isabella.* (M. ccxii, p. 442)

there came to him messengers invisible and made a marvellous tempest and noise in the castle, that it seemed as though the castle should have fallen down, and strake great strokes at his chamber door, that the good lady his wife was sore afraid." The knight pretended not to have heard, and insisted to his wife and the servants that their terrors were merely imaginary : " it was but the wind." Next night, however, " there was as great noise and greater, and such strokes given at his chamber door and windows as all should have been broken to pieces." The knight challenged the spirit, who confessed that he was a devil called Orthon, whom the priest had commissioned to trouble him. The knight persuaded him that he would find it more profitable to serve him

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 98. *The King of France receives news of the Turkish victory.* (M. ccxv, p. 448)

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 105. *The Duchess of Orleans leaving Paris.* (M. ccxvi, p. 453)

than a mere clerk; "so this spirit Orthon loved so the knight, that oftentimes he would come and visit him while he lay in his bed asleep, and other pull him by the ear or else strike at this chamber door or window to awake him; and when the knight awoke, then he would say: 'Orthon, let me sleep.' 'Nay,' quoth Orthon, 'that will I not do, till I have showed thee such tidings as are fallen a-late.' The lady the knight's wife would be sore affrayed, that her hair would stand up, and hide herself under the clothes. Then the knight would say: 'Why, what tidings hast thou brought me?' Quoth Orthon: 'I am come out of England, or out of Hungary or some other place, and yesterday I came thence, and such things are fallen, or such other.' So thus the lord of Corasse knew by Orthon everything that was done in any part of the world, and in this case he continued a five year, and could not keep his own counsel,

but at last discovered it to the Earl of Foix." The knight, after many years, importuned his familiar spirit to let himself be seen, and Orthon finally replied " the first thing that ye see tomorrow when ye rise out of bed, the same shall be I . . . And the next morning the lord rose ; and the lady his wife was so affrayed that she durst not rise, but feigned herself sick . . . ' Well,' quoth the knight, ' I would gladly see him ' ; and so he arose fair and easily out of his bed and sat down on the bed side, weening to have seen Orthon in his proper form ; but he saw nothing whereby he might say, ' Lo, yonder is Orthon.' " At night he reproached his familiar friend, who explained that he had appeared in the form of " two straws upon the pavement tumbling one upon another."

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 106. *The Duke and Duchess of Orleans discuss means of redeeming captives from the Turks.* (M. ccxvii, p. 453)

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 108. *The Duke of Gloucester plotting against Richard II.* (M. ccxviii, p. 453)

The knight insisted for next day; Orthon warned him of the risk he ran, but he would not be advised. Next morning, as he awoke, there in the castle yard was a sow, the greatest that ever he saw, lean and evil-favoured. "The Lord of Corasse had marvel of that lean sow and was weary of the sight of her and commanded his men to fetch the hounds, and said 'let the dogs hunt her to death and devour her.' His servants opened the kennels and let out his hounds and did set them on this sow; and at last the sow made a great cry and looked up to the Lord of Corasse, as he looked out at a window, and so suddenly vanished away, no man wist how." As for Orthon, "never after he came into the castle of Corasse, and also the knight died the same year next following."

" But now," pursues our Boswell to this welcome and communicative squire, " as to your first purpose : is the Earl of Foix served with such a messenger ? " " ' Surely, quoth the squire, it is the imagination of many that he hath such messengers ; for there is nothing done in any place but, an he set his mind thereto, he will know it, and when men think least thereof ; and so did he when the good knights and squires of this country were slain in Portugal at Juberoth. Some saith the knowledge of such things hath done him much profit, for an there be but the value of a spoon lost in his house, anon he will know where it is.' So thus then I took leave of the squire and went to other company, but I bare well away his tale." There is only one other passage that can approach these in the pleasant thrill of the supernatural ; it is where Froissart, on his last journey to England, met an old knight who had been in Ireland, and seized this occasion to question him about St. Patrick's Purgatory (p. 425). The Saxon, it must be confessed, did not make full use of his romantic opportunities here ; it is a thousand pities that Froissart fell upon no Celtic witness.

At Orthez, next to Sir Espaing de Lyon, Froissart found his most valuable informant in the Bastard of Mauléon (p. 336) who " alighted at my lodging at the Sign of the Moon . . . And when I heard his name and saw the Earl of Foix and every man do him so much honour . . . so then I fell in acquaintance with him . . . And at a time, as we were taking and devising of arms, sitting by the fire abiding for midnight, that the earl should go to supper, then his cousin put him in the way of speaking and telling of his life and of the deeds of arms that he had been at, saying how he had endured as much loss as profit. Then he demanded of me and said : ' Sir John, have ye in your history anything of this matters that I speak of ? ' And I answered and said : ' I could not tell till I hear them : shew forth your matter, and I will gladly hear you, for peradventure I have heard somewhat but not all.' ' That is true,' quoth the squire.

" Then he began to say thus . . ." The story fills two long chapters, from Poitiers to the stratagem by which he and six others, disguised as peasant women, slipped into Terry in Albigeois and took both town and castle, " whereby I have had great profit yearly, more than [my original] castle of Trigalet with its appurtenance is worth." Here certain companions at arms joined in, (p. 339) and " with these words they called for wine and drank. Then the Bascot said to me : ' Sir John, are ye well informed of my life ? Yet I have had other adventures, which I have not shewed, nor will not speak of all.' ' Sir,' quoth I, ' I have well heard you.' "

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 118. *The payment of ransom for the Comte de Nevers.* (M. ccxx, p. 453)

7

Froissart tells us no single thing, perhaps, which we could not pick up here and there from other sources ; but the value of the chronicle lies in our author's lively interest in things great and small, and in his power of vivid narrative. As Dryden said of Chaucer, " Here is God's plenty ! " The style of the *Chronicles* is (to use a word in which W. P. Ker delighted) urbane ; such a style as we have in Addison, but in none of the medieval English prose authors until we come to Malory. For generations before Froissart Frenchmen in polite society had practised speech as a fine art, and men of letters had taken the cue from these men of rank, giving the speech a more studied and durable form upon paper, but without any such elaboration as to blunt its direct and natural force. In England, when Lord Berners came forward, society had advanced sufficiently during the past hundred years to give the translator some of the author's own advantages ; here, in our own tongue, we have urbane speech. Berners has not the subtle charm of Malory's style, which is unequalled in England for many generations afterwards ; nor had Froissart himself the higher poetic effects of the great French romancers from whom Malory drew. Nothing in the *Chronicles* can come near, in its own

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 124b. *The ransomed captives taking leave of Amourach.* (M. ccxxi, p. 453)

way, to Guinevere's last parting from Lancelot; yet Froissart can strike the true tragic note, in the midst of his childlike joy in fighting and pageantry and all the brilliant side of life. This comes out in his story of our first invasion of Normandy, and again in the sack of Limoges. In this latter place the tragic note is heightened by what he has told us earlier concerning the Black Prince; Poitiers and Limoges form one of the crudest among many crude medieval contrasts in this book. After the great victory, the Prince had stood at supper as a mere servant, and had refused to sit at John's table, out of respect not only for his royal rank but for his bravery in the battle; "for this day ye have won the high renown of prowess and have [sur]passed this day, in valiantness, all other of your party" (p. 131). Fourteen years later, when Limoges had rebelled against him and

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 131b. *The reception of the ransomed captives in France.* (M. ccxxi, p. 453)

gone over to the French side, and when his men had sapped the wall and stormed in through the breach, then the Prince, too hopelessly weakened by dysentery to stand or walk, stayed his chariot to watch three Frenchmen in single combat with three Englishmen ; the sporting side of war appealed to the sick man, but he did nothing to stop the general massacre of the multitude which had been ordered in revenge for the treachery of the bishop and principal citizens. " There was not so hard a heart within the city of Limoges, an if he had any remembrance of God, but that wept piteously for the great mischief that they saw before their eyen ; for more than three thousand men, women and children were slain and beheaded that day. God have mercy on their souls, for I trow they were martyrs ! " (p. 21). It is here that we see one of the greatest differences between medieval and modern ideals. We ourselves generally strive, in theory at least, to keep the just mean ; that is our idea of the balance of life ; but our forefathers' conception of moral balance was rather as the compensating forward and backward swing of a pendulum. When the Italian chronicler Geoffrey Malaterra, in about 1100, describes this new race of Normans who had gained a firm footing in the South and in Sicily, he tells us they are " evenly balanced between greed and avarice," not meaning that they kept the medium but that they oscillated so far in both directions as to render either word, by itself, inapplicable. The thirteenth century noble who was a prototype of Robin Hood, Fulk Fitz-Warine, after a lifetime spent in successful freebooting, balances the account by building a rich abbey, and diverting the highroad so that it runs through his castle hall, and no wayfarer can miss his hospitality.[16]

In considering Froissart's world, we have already begun with himself, his outlook, his literary methods and his immediate surroundings ; let us now reckon up what he has to tell us about the whole society of his time.

There is a school of modern writers which lays great emphasis on the word *universality* as applied to medieval civilization. There was but one Church (we are told), the Roman ; and one universal language for all educated men, Latin ; therefore it was a world of comparative unity ; the modern curses of sectarianism and nationalism were unborn. Neither Froissart's *Chronicles* nor any contemporary document, I think, will be found, on close examination, to support this idea in its modern exaggerated form. The One Church, and the One Latin Language, had almost as little to do with ending the Hundred Years War as with beginning it. Latin was far less generally understood, in any real sense, than is frequently asserted or implied nowadays ; again, Church unity depended not only upon conviction but also upon force ; and, as for nationalism, it came in inevitably with the creation of nationalities. There was, in Froissart's day, no French nation in the strictest modern sense ; France was rather an agglomeration of different nations, normally in rivalry or at war with each other, and not always even capable of combining to resist a common enemy. The Hundred Years' War did much to weld these disparate elements

[16] See p. 119 of the edition of this romance in " The King's Classics."

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 134. *The arrest of the Duke of Gloucester.* (M. ccxxii, p. 455)

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 141. *The Earl Marshal's challenge to the Earl of Derby.* (M. ccxxiv, p. 455)

together in opposition to England ; yet even when Froissart was at Orthez, after more than half a century of warfare, the bitterest fighting was often between French and French, as it was later on in the days of our Henry V. There is a very real sense in which we may say that Froissart chronicles a war between one French nation and another French nation, wherein (apart from the freemasonry which existed on either side between the knights, who formed a tiny fraction of the population) there was as much ravage and brutality as there ever has been between France and Germany. The aggregates of population were smaller ; instead of the ravages of one large unit by another, it was rather the ravage of a multiplicity of smaller units by a multiplicity of smaller,

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 138b. *The assembly of Prelates and others at Rheims.* (M. ccxxiii, p. 455)

but in that we find no real gain to civilization or humanity.[17] The sum-total was, on the whole, worse than that of to-day; so far as we can mark any difference at all, we must say that a larger proportion of Christians were killed or ravaged by fellow-Christians then than now. Again, in the nature of the case, Churchmanship by birth or by compulsion was not always operative in conduct. Froissart, who was not only no heretic but actually a priest, falls in naturally enough with the conventions of his day and his class. He is distressed at the Great Schism, in which canonized saints took opposite sides, and one, at least, St. Vincent Ferrer, doubted whether the others could finally escape hell. "In our faith,' writes Froissart, "there ought to be no variation; for, as there is one God in heaven, so also there ought to be but one God on earth" (p. 398). Again, he disapproved the anticlerical policy of Gian Galeazzo Visconti: "He held the error and opinion of his father that was, how one should neither honour nor worship God. He took from abbeys and priories much of their revenues and took them to himself: he said the monks were too deliciously nourished with good wines and delicious meats, by which superfluities (he said) they could not rise at midnight nor do their service as they should do. He said Saint Benet held not the order of his religion after that manner, and so, (he said) he would make them to live with eggs and small wine, to clear their voices to sing the higher. These lords in their days lived like popes: they did great despites in their time to men of holy Church: they set nothing by the pope's curse, and specially after the schism began and that there was two popes; that the one cursed, the other assoiled. The lords of Milan did but mock at their doings, and so did many other lords through the world" (p. 439). Yet, when we look carefully into some of his other pages, we may find certain significant tales and side-remarks for which he evidently counted on sympathy from his aristocratic audience. The tragedy of the unpopular minister Bétisac shows how easily the Inquisition could be used by a political party in a purely political quarrel; it throws much light on the story of Joan of Arc (pp. 392 ff.). Again, Froissart is perfectly aware that, much as could be pleaded in his day, as in our own, in favour of an established and endowed Church, yet establishment and endowment can never be quite compatible with freedom in the strictest sense. In 1399, the most Christian King of Aragon "saw well the Pope's letters, but he made no force of them, and said to his council that were about him . . . 'Let the clergy alone; for, if they purpose to live, the prelates must obey the great lords under whom their rents and revenues are'" (p. 460). When Jean de Varennes, a Doctor of Laws, a rich courtier at Avignon and a prospective cardinal, resigned all his benefices but one, and retired to a village near Reims where he preached fervently against the Italian Boniface as antipope, there were some who suspected him as a mere tool of the French Cardinals (p. 423; miniature, p. 58). Again, Froissart shows us how little the King of

[17] See p. 46 for testimony as to the extent to which private war was actually legitimated by the constitution of the Empire. For the ravage of war see pp. 51, 57, 59, 94-99, and *passim*. For the use of abbeys or churches as fortresses see pp. 212, 246-7, 344.

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 148. *Richard II pronounces sentence of banishment upon them both.* (M. ccxxv, p. 455)

England cared for the excommunication even of an undoubted pope (p. 60). The Great Schism he traces to the personal fears of the Cardinals, intimidated by the Roman populace, " for they had rather 'a died confessors than martyrs." (p. 209). He sees clearly enough the seamy side of the indulgence system. When the disbanded soldiers, the " Companies," were wasting France " even as the Vandals had done in times of old," then Innocent VI offered the plenary indulgence of a crusader—complete " pardon from penalty and guilt " up to date—to " all those that would take on them his croisey and that would abandon their bodies willingly to destroy these evil people and their companions." The Cardinal Bishop of Ostia " retained all manner of soldiers, such as would

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 149. *The Earl of Derby embarks for France.* (M. ccxxvi, p. 455)

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 151. *The Earl of Derby enters Paris.*
(M. ccxxvii, p. 455)

save their souls in attaining to these said pardons, but they should have none other wages ; wherefore that journey brake, for every man departed, some into Lombardy, some to their own countries, and some went to the said evil company, so that daily they increased." Finally, the Companies had to be bought off with 60,000 florins in hand and a promise of papal indulgence for their sins if they went to Italy : " howbeit there were many that returned again to Burgundy " (p. 143). When, again, in 1383, the Bishop of Norwich led an army against France on the plea that he fought for the real Pope Urban against the false Pope Clement, Froissart gives us a cynical contrast (p. 296). On the one hand, " the prelates in their jurisdiction began to preach this voyage in manner of a croisey, whereby the people of England, who lightly believed, gave thereto great faith, and believed verily that they could not go to Paradise

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 152b. *The Emperor and the French King in Council at Rheims.* (M. ccxxviii, p. 455)

if they died that year without they gave somewhat in pure alms. Toward this war at London and in the diocese there was gathered a tun-full of gold and silver, and according to the pope's bulls he that most gave most pardon obtained; and whosoever died in that season and gave his goods to these pardons, was clean assoiled from pain and from sin; and, according to the tenour of the bulls, happy was he that died in that season, for to have so noble absolution. Thus they gathered money all the winter and Lent season, what by the pardons and by the dimes, that as it was said it drew to the sum of twenty-five hundred thousand franks." On the other hand, the Pope saw that

he must also tax the clergy for these military expenses; "for he knew well the nobles of England, for all his absolutions, would not ride forth in war without money; for, men of war live not by pardons, nor set they not much thereby but in the article of death." When, again, the old squire Henry Christead told Froissart how the four kings of Ireland, allowing themselves for the first time to be put into breeches, and to be knighted afresh, not merely in their own casual ancestral fashion but "in the holy church," had put themselves under the lordship of Edward III "by treaty, and the grace of God," then our chronicler answered his interlocutor: "Indeed the grace of God is good; whoso can have it, it is much worth; but it is seen nowadays that

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 160. *The Duke of Lancaster sends a letter to the Earl of Derby.* (M. ccxxx, p. 462)

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 163. *Richard II gives credentials to the Earl of Salisbury, to hinder the Earl of Derby's marriage in France.* (M. ccxxxii, p. 462)

earthly princes getteth little but if it be by puissance"; that is, by main force (p. 433). The same squire had evidently not carried away any strong sense of spiritual kinship with the Irish: "On a time I demanded them of their belief; wherewith they were not content and said how they believed on God and on the Trinity, as well as we." The whole episode is of very great interest.

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 166b. *Richard II sets out on his expedition to Ireland.* (M. ccxxxiii, p. 462)

8

Of pageantry we have abundance in this chronicle; and the illuminator has taken advantage of this. The fullest description is that of Queen Isabel's entrance into Paris in 1389 (pp. 383 ff.; see miniature, p. 8 here).[19] Little did men dream at that moment, nor did Froissart himself live to know, how this Bavarian princess would be looked back upon in later years as the antitype of Joan of Arc; Isabel the Sinful Eve who had ruined the realm of France, and Joan as the Virgin come to redeem it. "The Sunday the twentieth day of June in the year of our Lord God a thousand three hundred fourscore and nine there was people in Paris and without, such number that it was marvel to behold . . . here was such people in the streets that it seemed that all the world had been there," not only of small folk but of great, princes and princesses of the blood royal. "At the first gate of Saint Denis entering into Paris there was a heaven

[19] For the minute and uncomplimentary examination to which Isabel had been submitted before she was judged worthy of betrothal to the King, "according to the usage of France," see Berners, vol. II, chap. 5 (ed. 1812, p. 11) and compare two fairly close parallels in my *Life in the Middle Ages* vol. III, p. 155, and *Chaucer and his England*, p. 181. The three together are of supreme interest in the history of manners.

made full of stars, and within it young children apparelled like angels sweetly singing, and among them an image of our Lady holding in figure a little child playing by himself with a little mill made of a great nut: this heaven was high and richly apparelled with the arms of France, with a banner of the sun shining of gold, casting his rays; this was devised by the king for the feast of the jousts. The queen and the other ladies, as they passed under in at the great gate, they had great pleasure to behold it, and so had all other that passed by." This was only the beginning, and a small beginning, of the day's ceremonies. A fountain ran piment [spiced wine] and claret, with attendants holding goblets of gold and offering drink to all that passed by. Farther on, a stage with a castle, defended by Saladin and stormed by Crusaders. Next, another castle, "and a heaven clouded and full of stars richly devised, and therein the figure of God sitting in majesty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and within the heaven children in figure of angels sweetly singing, which pageant was greatly praised." As the queen passed by, two of these angels stepped forth and crowned her with a crown of gold. Then another scaffold, covered—as indeed the whole street was decked—"with cloths of silk and camlet, [of] Alexandria or Damascus." When they reached the heart of Paris, the Châtelet, there was a more elaborate castle, with more complicated pageantry, than any of these others; thence over the bridge, under awnings of green and crimson spangled with stars, towards Notre Dame. But, as they went," they found by their way other plays and pastimes greatly to their pleasure. Among all other there was a master came out of Genoa: he had tied a cord on the highest house on the bridge of Saint Michael over all the houses, and the other end was tied on the highest tower in Our Lady's church; and as the queen passed by, and was in the great street called Our Lady's street, because it was late, this said master with two brenning candles in his hands issued out of a little stage that he had made on the height of Our Lady's tower, and singing he went upon the cord all along the great street, so that all that saw him had marvel how it might be, and he bare still in his hands two brenning candles, so that it might well be seen over all Paris and two mile without Paris; he was such a tumbler that his lightness was greatly praised." For the wedding itself, and then the solemn crowning and anointing in the Sainte Chapelle, and the feast (where, even below the high tables, sat more than five hundred ladies and damosels), and the evening ride with more than a thousand horses to the Château de St.-Pol, and the dancings and revellings all that night, and the portentous list of wedding-presents, filling nearly a quarto page, the reader must go to the text of Froissart.

Most picturesque also, in itself, and even more noteworthy in its tragic consequences, was that masque of the Wild Men of the Forest whom Berners describes, in the language of heraldry, as "wodehouses" (p. 419; see plate, p. 52). A young knight, in 1393, married one of the queen's gentlewomen; and the feast was celebrated at court. A squire of Normandy "advised to make some pastime . . . He devised six coats made of linen cloth covered with pitch, and thereon flax like hair, and had them ready in a chamber: the king put on

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 170. *The Archbishop of Canterbury visits the Earl of Derby in France.* (M. ccxxxiv, p. 462)

one of them . . . and the squire himself had on the sixth : and when they were thus arrayed in these said coats and sewed fast in them, they seemed like wodehouses full of hair from the top of the head to the sole of the foot." The king commanded all the varlets holding torches to stand by the walls, and all the dancers to avoid contact with the wild men. But " soon after the Duke of Orleans entered into the hall, accompanied with four knights and six torches, and knew nothing of the King's commandment for the torches nor of the mummery that was coming thither, but thought to behold the dancing and began himself to dance. Therewith the king, with the five others, came in : they were so disguised in flax that no man knew them : five of them were fastened one to another ; the king was loose and went before and led the devise. When they entered into the hall every man took so great heed to them that they forgat the torches. The king departed from his company and went to the ladies to sport with them as youth required, and so passed by the queen and came to the duchess of Berry, who took and held him by the arm to know who he was, but the king would not show his name. Then the duchess said : " Ye shall not escape me till I know your name." In this mean season great mischief fell on the other, and by reason of the Duke of Orleans : howbeit, it was by ignorance and against his will, for if he had considered before the mischief fell, he would not have done as he did for all the good in the world : but he was so desirous to know what personages the five were that danced, he put one of his torches that his servants held so near that the heat of the fire entered into the flax (wherein if fire take there is no remedy) and suddenly was on a bright flame, and so each of them set fire on other. The pitch was so fastened to the linen cloth and their shirts so dry and fine and so joining to their flesh that they began to burn and to cry for help. None durst come near them ; they that did, burnt their hands by reason of the pitch. One of them, called Nantouillet, advised him how the buttery was thereby ; he fled thither and cast himself into a vessel full of water, wherein they rinsed pots, which saved him, or else he had been dead as the other were, yet he was sore hurt with the fire . . . A piteous noise there was in the hall. The Duchess of Berry delivered the king from that peril, for she did cast over him the train of her gown and covered him from the fire . . . the bastard of Foix, who was all on a fire, cried ever with a loud voice : ' Save the king, save the king ! ' Thus was the king saved : it was happy for him that he went from his company, for else he had been dead without remedy. This great mischief fell thus about midnight in the hall of Saint-Pol in Paris, where there was two burnt to death in the place, and other two, the bastard of Foix and the earl of Joigny, borne to their lodgings and died within two days after in great misery and pain. Thus the feast of this marriage brake up in heaviness ; howbeit, there was no remedy ; the fault was only in the Duke of Orleans, and yet he thought none evil when he put down the torch." The story made a great impression throughout France ; in Paris (says Froissart) the commons would have lynched the king's uncles and his brother if he had been among the dead. Yet even that might have been better for him and for the country ; for he had already had a fit of

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 172b. *The Earl of Derby takes leave of the King of France.* (M. ccxxxv, p. 462)

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 174b. *Londoners welcome the Earl of Derby.* (M. ccxxxvi, p. 462)

raving madness; and gradually he sank into hopeless lunacy, while his uncles misgoverned in his name. Our miniaturist has lost a great opportunity here; he does indeed give us the king riding forth to punish the Duke of Brittany, but not the tragedy in which that ride ended. Yet this first outbreak of madness is one of Froissart's most living descriptions (p. 415)—the oppressive heat of a summer day, felt in full force as they rode out from the forest into the open—the king in a coat of steel covered with black velvet—his thoughts dwelling on a recent tale of treachery—a sudden clash of arms by accident behind him—the flashing of a polished helmet in the sun—and then "a great influence from

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 177. *Ricyard II and his train riding to the castle of Flint.* (M. ccxxxvii, p. 462)

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 178. *He surrenders to the Earl of Derby.* (M. ccxxxviii, p. 464)

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 181b. *He is put in the Tower of London.* (M. ccxxxix, p. 465)

heaven fell upon the French king " ; he drew his sword and slashed at random among his followers until he was outwearied and could be mastered. Yet still he was king, and often sat on his throne ; so that, as Michelet points out, one of the ironies of history is in that colloquy at Reims in 1397 (p. 455), where the Emperor Wenceslas and the King of France met in an attempt to settle the Papal Schism, and to make terms with Benedict XIII (see miniature, p. 100). The Emperor was a notorious drunkard, and incapable of serious business after a fairly early hour in the morning ; the King, on the contrary, was least crazy after he had eaten and drunken ; while the Pope, sober and sane enough in other respects, was less amenable to reason on this particular subject than either the drunkard or the madman. The King's illness, like so much else in the Middle Ages, was attributed by some to poison ; the Duchess of Orleans, his aunt, was suspected of the crime, and compelled to leave Paris (miniature, p. 82).

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 184b. *He yields the crown to the Earl of Derby*. (M. ccxl, p. 468)

9

Next in their magnificence to the Queen's entry came the jousts at St. Inglevert, on that bare chalk down under which the modern railway runs between Calais and Boulogne, and where there was a vast aerodrome during the great war. Here again Macaulay has unfortunately felt compelled to abridge; the chapter is No. CLXVIII of the second volume in the 1812 edition of Lord Berners. The story was long celebrated in French ballads: "I have heard" (writes one poet) "the name of St. Inglevert, the place where three French Knights of great renown jousted for thirty days long."[19] But elsewhere we see why the Church banned these tourneys, as occasions of murder and bitter vendettas (p. 86). This must always be borne in mind as a set-off against that freemasonry between gentlefolk which the code of chivalry inculcated.

[19] See miniatures, pp. 12, 13, and 20.

So, again, must the question of ransom, which Froissart treats in the most prosaic and matter-of-fact fashion (see especially pp. 104, 126, 128, 178, 184, 195, 198, 337, 349, 378, 439). Knights traded in ransoms and, indeed, in wardships and marriages also, as one trades in stocks and shares.[20] More than once, Froissart intimates that slaughter among the nobility in war is specially regrettable for economic reasons. Edward III's lament at Crécy is not quite so clearly explained, but nothing could be more explicit than our chronicler's story of Aljubarrota, that great Anglo-Portuguese victory over the allied French and Spaniards which was commemorated by the foundation of Batalha, one of the most magnificent abbeys in Europe. There was a rumour of counter-attack at the end of the fight, and the victors argued, 'for if we kill not [our captives], while we be a-fighting they will escape and slay us; for there is no trust in a man's enemy.' So, behold the great evil adventure fell that Saturday; for they slew as many good prisoners as would well have been worth, one with another, four hundred thousand franks" (p. 349; miniature, p. 88).

Moreover, this cash nexus which worked with comparatively little friction between English and French nobles was more difficult between more distant countries. Here, for instance, is Froissart's judgment on German conditions (Kervyn, vol. X, p. 229). "So Sir Guillaume de Nieille remained a prisoner in English hands; and then he bargained for his ransom and returned to France, under contract, by his master's (i.e., captor's) free leave; even as all gentlefolk, whether English or French, have always done to each other. But not so the Germans; for when a German hath a prisoner in his power, then he putteth him into stocks and irons and bonds and into hard prison, nor hath he any pity on him; and all for the sake of extorting more money."[21]

Indeed, Kervyn's diligence enables us to judge with some accuracy the extent to which a Frenchman (such as this Valenciennes citizen felt himself) was conscious of national differences between himself and the German. Centuries earlier, two abbots had noted independently the difficulty of getting French and Germans to work together even in God's war, the Crusades. "Our [French] men could not tolerate the Germans," writes one; and another, to Innocent III, "we cannot find in history that Germans and French were ever at accord in any great enterprise."[22] And now, at the end of the fourteenth century, here are the indications collected impartially from Froissart (Kervyn, vol. XXIV, p. 13, where full references are supplied).

"The Germans remained staunchly attached to the Roman Pope [i.e., Urban and his successors], whereas the French clung to Clement. They are very pious and very devout on their pilgrimages.[23] They cling stoutly to their

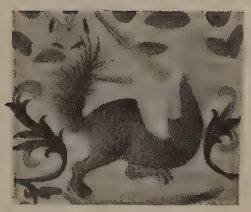
[20] P. 215. I have given other evidence on p. 198 of *Chaucer and his England;* Sir Maurice de Berkeley, in about 1400, bought forty Scottish prisoners.

[21] Kervyn, vol. X, p. 229.

[22] I have given this more fully on p. 179 of my *Crusades, Commerce and Adventure.*

[23] Compare a remarkable passage from an Italian chronicler of a century earlier, in my *Social Life in Britain,* pp. 239 ff, where both sides of the German character are given.

liberty, and it has never been possible to subject them to tallage [*i.e.*, more or less irresponsible taxation]. They are hospitable, as the Crusaders of Nicopolis learnt in their misfortunes." With these their virtues we must contrast their failings. "Of their nature they are rough and of coarse intellect, except it be to take their own profit, wherein they are expert and dexterous enough. They are too inclined to greed, and bad payers. They are glad to serve under foreign princes . . . but the Prince of Wales would not have them in his army, whatever homage they might render to his glory. Many took service in the Companies. In their own country, they give the name of *linfars* to those who thus take up arms to live upon the burghers and countryfolk; and such *linfars* are the greatest plunderers and robbers in the world . . . They are reproached with hardness to their prisoners . . . they are also 'haughty folk' whom it is dangerous to attack . . . The Germans do not love the French . . . Robert of Artois said to Edward III: 'There is nothing in the world which the Germans desire so much as to find some cause and title for making war upon the Kingdom of France, for the great pride that is to be abased there and for to share in her riches.'"

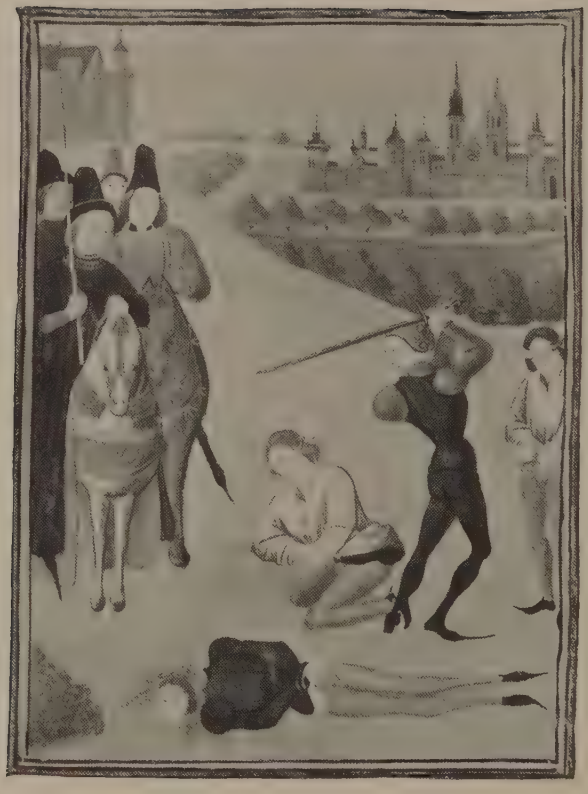


MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 189b. *The Landing of the Dame de Coucy at Boulogne.* (M. ccxlii, p. 472)

10

Here again we come upon these medieval contrasts, even greater than in our own day. There is endless opportunity for quotation; but I may conclude with as much as space permits of one most romantic episode (in the sense in which William Morris conceived romance)—tantalizingly abbreviated here, it is true, yet at greater length than other writers, so far as I know, have afforded. In so far as the whole social characteristics bred by the Hundred Years' War can be summed up in a single episode, we may find this in the story of the *condottiere* Aymerigot Marcel.[24] The Count of Armagnac and the Dauphin, wishing to join the crusade in Africa,[25] bought from this freebooter the rock-fortress of Alleuse (Cantal) which he had captured and used as his base of operations; thus they hoped to divert him and his company from their own five provinces. This they did "at the instant requests and prayers of the good men of the cities and towns of the plain countries aforesaid; so that there

[24] Unfortunately, Macaulay gives only the chapter-heading; the whole story may be read in Kervyn, vol. XIV, pp. 160 ff, and in the 1812 edition of Berners, vol. II, pp. 479 ff.
[25] See plate, p. 26.



MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 193b. *The decapitation of Richard II's partizans.* (M. ccxliii, p. 472)

was a tax gathered in Auvergne, Gevaudan, Rovergue, Cahorsin and in Limosin, to the sum of two hundred thousand francs, so that poor and rich paid so much that divers sold and laid to pledge their heritages, and were glad so to do to live at rest in their countries; and the good men thought by reason of paying of this money, and avoiding of the said live robbers and pillagers, that they should then have been quit for ever of them: but it proved not so in divers places, and specially of Aymerigot Marcel and of his men; for after that the castle of Alleuse was yielded up and sold by Aymerigot Marcel to the Earl of Armagnac, which fortress stood in the heart of all Auvergne, this Aymerigot was well worth in ready money a hundred thousand francs, which he had gotten by robbery and pillage, and by ransoming men, and blackmail of the country, and he had kept the rule more than ten year." Armagnac tried to induce Marcel to go crusading with him; but the freebooter always found excuses for delay. In fact, "Aymerigot was sore displeased with himself in that he had sold and delivered the strong castle of Alleuse: for he saw his own authority thereby greatly abated, and perceived well how he was the less feared: for all the season that he kept it, he was doubted and feared, and honoured with all men of war of his part, and had kept a great state always in the castle of Alleuse: the blackmail of countries that he held under subjection was well worth yearly twenty thousand florins. When he remembered all this he was sorrowful; his treasure he thought he would not diminish; he was wont daily to search for new pillages, whereby increased his profit, and then he saw that all was closed from him. Then he said and imagined, that to pillage and to rob (all things considered) was a good life, and so repented him of his good doing. On a time he said to his old companions: 'Sirs, there is no sport nor glory in this world among men of war, but to use such life as we have done in time past; what a joy it was to us when we rode forth at adventure, and sometime found by the way a rich prior or merchant, or a route of muleteers of Montpellier, of Narbonne, of Lyons, of Fongaris, of Beziers, of Toulouse, or of Carcassone, laden with cloth of Bruxelles, or furs coming from the fairs, or laden with spicery from Bruges, from Damascus or from Alexandria! whatsoever we met, all was ours, or else ransomed at our pleasure; daily we got new money, and the villeins of Auvergne and of Limosin daily provided and brought to our castle wheat meal, bread ready baked, oats for our horses, and litter, and good wines, beefs and fat muttons, pullets and wild fowl: we were furnished as though we had been kings: when we rode forth all the country trembled for fear, all was ours going or coming. How took we Carlaste, I and the Bastard of Campagne! and I and Perot of Bernois took Chalucet! how did we scale with little aid the strong castle of Marquell, pertaining to the Earl Dauphin! I kept it not past five days but I received for it on a fair table five thousand francs, and forgave one thousand for the love of the Earl Dauphin's children. By my faith this was a fair and good life, wherefore I repute myself sore deceived, in that I have rendered up the fortress of Alleuse: for it would have been kept from all the world, and the day that I gave it up it was furnished with victuals to have been kept seven year without

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 196b. *The King of France leading an expedition against Calais.* (M. ccxliv, p. 472)

any revictualling : this Earl of Armagnac hath deceived me ; . . . certain I sore repent me of that I have done.' And when such of his companions as had served him long heard him speak those words, they perceived well how he spake them with all his heart unfained ; then they said to him : 'Aymerigot, we are all ready to serve you : let us renew again our war, and let us get some stronghold in Auvergne, or in Limosin, and let us fortify it, and then, Sir, we shall soon recover our damages' . . . 'Well,' quoth Aymerigot, 'I have good-will thus to do, saving I am by name expressed in the charter of the truce.' 'What for that, Sir,' quoth his company : 'ye need not care therefore if ye list ; ye are not subject to the French king, ye owe him neither faith nor obeisance, ye are the king of England's man, for your heritage (which is all destroyed and lost) lieth in Limosin ; and Sir, we must live ; and though we make war to live, the Englishmen will not be discontent with us, and such as be in our case will draw to us; and Sir, we have now good title to make war, for we be not now in Auvergne, where the covenant was made that we be bound unto ; let us send to the villeins of the villages when we be once in a stronghold, and command them to pay us a tribute, or else to make them sore war. 'Well, Sirs,' quoth Aymerigot, 'first let us provide for a strong place to abide in, and to draw unto when we need.' Some of them said ; 'Sir, we know where there is a stronghold, with a little new fortifying, pertaining to the heritage of the lord De la Tour : no man keepeth it : let us draw thither and fortify it, then may we at our ease run into Auvergne and Limosin.' 'Where lieth this place,' quoth Aymerigot ? 'Sir,' quoth they, 'within a league of La Tour, and it is called the Roche of Vandois.' 'It is true,' quoth Aymerigot, 'I know it well, it is a meet place for us, let us go thither and fortify it.' Thus on this purpose they concluded, and on a day assembled together and went to the Roche of Vandois. Then Aymerigot aviewed the place to see if it were worth the fortifying thereof : and when he had well aviewed the situation thereof, and the defences that might be made there, it pleased him right well. Thus they took it and fortified it little and little, ere they began to do any displeasure in the country : and when they saw the place strong sufficiently to resist against siege or assault, and that they were well horsed, and well provided of all things necessary for their defence, then they began to ride abroad in the country, and took prisoners and ransomed them, and provided their hold with flesh, meal, wax, wine, salt, iron and steel, and of all other necessaries ; there came nothing amiss to them without it had been too heavy or too hot : the country all about, and the people, weening to have been in rest and peace by reason of the truce made between the two kings and their realms, they began then to be sore abashed : for these robbers and pillagers took them in their houses and wheresoever they found them in the fields labouring ; and they called themselves adventurers." The people of Auvergne sent to Paris, where the king had pity on their distress, and despatched the Viscount of Meaux with a solid force of spears and crossbowmen, who were considerably increased by local levies and who laid siege to Roche Vandois. Marcel slipped out to gather reinforcements and raise the siege ; he left in command his uncle Guyot du

MS. Harl. 4380, Fol. 197b. *The funeral of King Richard II.* (M. ccxlv, p. 472)

Sall, with strict orders never to risk a sortie. The besiegers, by a feigned assault and flight, tempted him out, overcame him, and took him prisoner. They then offered him his life, and that of his fellow-prisoners, if he would persuade the garrison to give up the castle ; which they did. When this news came to our adventurer :

" ' Ah, that old traitor ! ' quoth Aymerigot, ' by Saint Marcel, if I had him here now I should slay him with my own hands ; he hath dishonoured me and all my companions. At my departing I straitly enjoined him that for no matter of assault or skirmish made by the Frenchmen he should in no wise open the barriers, and he hath done the contrary, this damage is not to be recovered, nor I wot not whither to go ; they of Chalucet and they of Donsac will keep the peace, and my companions be spread abroad like men discomfited, yet I wot not whither to bring them. Thus, all thing considered, I am in a hard part ; for I have greatly displeased the French king, the Duke of Berry and the lords of Auvergne, and all the people of the country, for I have made them war, the peace during ; I had trusted to have won, but I am now in a great adventure to lose, nor I wot not to whom to resort to ask council. I would, now, that I and my goods and my wife were in England ; there I should be in surety ; but how should I get thither and carry all my stuff with me ? I should be robbed twenty times ere I could get to the sea, for all the passages in Poictou in Rochelle, in France, in Normandy and in Picardy are straitly kept ; it will be hard to escape from taking, and if I be taken I shall be sent to the French king ; so shall I be lost and all mine. I think the surest way for me were to draw to Bourdeaux, and little and little to get my goods thither and to abide there till the war renew again, for I have good hope that after this truce war shall be open again between England and France.' Thus Aymerigot Marcel debated the matter in himself ; he was heavy and sorrowful and wist not what way to take, either to recover some fortress in Auvergne, or else to go to Bourdeaux and send for his wife thither, and for his goods little and little secretly : if he had done so, he had taken the surest way ; but he did contrary, and thereby lost all, life and goods. Thus fortune payeth the people when she hath set them on the highest part of her wheel ; for suddenly she reverseth them to the lowest part, ensample by this Aymerigot. It was said he was well worth a hundred thousand francs ; and all was lost on a day ; wherefore I may well say that fortune hath played her pageant with him as she hath done with many more and shall do." Aymerigot, at his wit's end, took refuge with his cousin, a squire in Auvergne ; this cousin, in order to purchase his own reconciliation with the Duc de Berry, cast him into prison and gave him up. He was taken to Paris, pilloried, beheaded, and set up in four quarters on four of the city's gates. Miniature, p. 24, which deals with this execution, gives incidentally a clear idea of the vast preponderance of wooden houses in most medieval towns, outside Italy and the South. It was nearly always the carpenter, not the mason, who was employed to build a house.

Put that side by side with what Walsingham, the monk of St. Albans, tells us under the year 1348, after the capture of Calais. " Then in England folk

thought that a new sun was rising over England, for the abundance of peace, the plenty of possessions, and the glory of victory. For there was no woman of any name, but had somewhat of the spoils of Caen, Calais and other cities beyond the seas. Furs, feather-beds, or household utensils, tablecloths and necklaces, cups of gold or silver, linen and sheets, were to be seen scattered about England in different houses. Then began the English ladies to wax wanton in the vesture of the French women ; and, as the latter grieved to have lost their goods, so the former rejoiced to have obtained them."

The contemporary Knight of La Tour-Landry, writing to school his daughters, warns them emphatically against the costly and tasteless finery introduced among the " smart set." He quotes a lady who spoke to a lord concerning his wife's old-fashioned style of dress : to which he answered " I will see that she be arrayed after the state of the good women and worshipful of France . . . that hath not taken the state of the unthrifty women that be evil women of their body and chamberers to English men and other men of war that dwellen with them as their lemans ; for they were the first that brought up this estate that ye use, of great purfles and slit cotes ; for I have [been] of that time, and saw it."[26] Our own illuminator illustrates this to some extent, though not so definitely as some others who might be chosen : the costumes which he shows us, whether for men or for women, are far more elaborate, and proportionately less artistic, than those which had been fashionable for many generations past. Compare the ladies in the wedding scene (miniature p. 11) with the admirable simplicity of those on the great Flemish brass at King's Lynn. We must not ascribe every change to the influence of that great war ; but unquestionably it did cause much social unrest ; and, as most people would feel, it was followed by a certain debasement of taste.

[26] E. E. T. S., p. 30.

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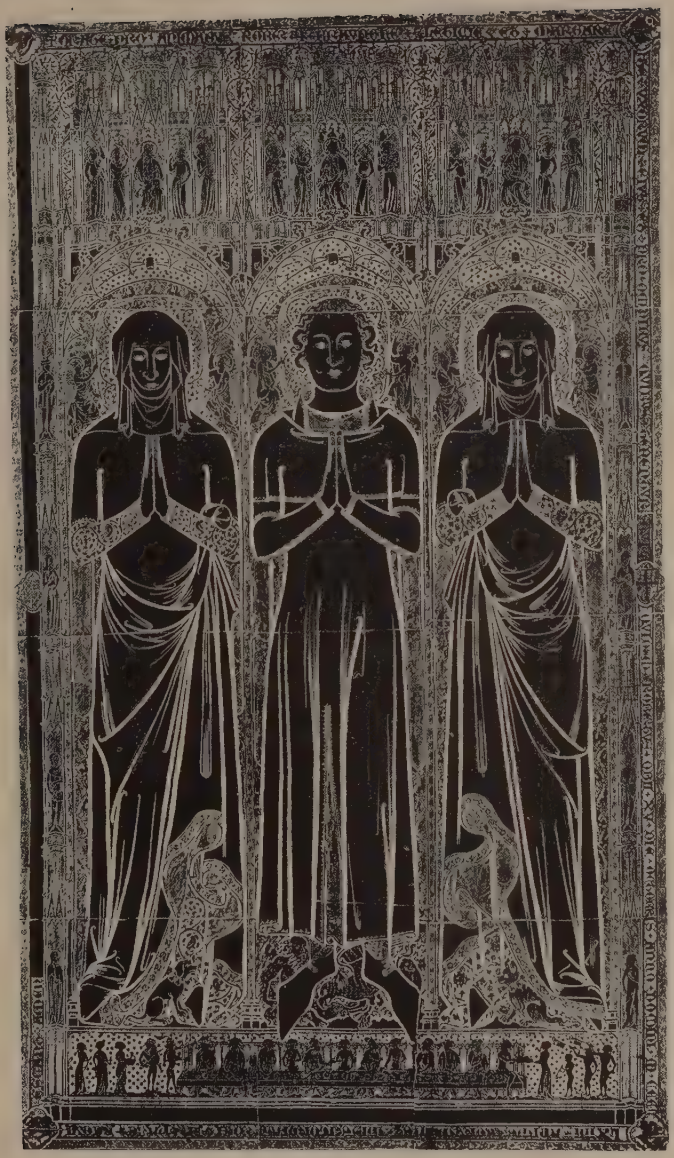
Memorial brass to Robert Braunche in the Church of S. Margaret, King's Lynn, Norfolk. (1364)



Something, however, must be put down to the personal taste of our illuminator, who, like many of his time, exaggerated the peculiarities of the moment. His men and women resemble each other somewhat as Aubrey Beardsley's did ; their spindle-shanks and their exaggerated breadth of shoulder must not be taken too literally. For he pursues this trick even into their armour ; and there we have unimpeachable evidence that he exaggerates ; for the steel itself which has come down to us has not shrunk.

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Gilt-latten effigy of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, from his tomb in the Beauchamp Chapel, the Church of S. Mary, Warwick. (c. 1450)

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